THE RADIANT STORY OF JESUS

ALPHONSE SÉCHÉ

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By

Alphonse Séché

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PREFACE

Instruction in religion has been dropped from the university curriculum. Mythology, an acquaintance with which is indispensable to the understanding of Greek literature, is studied only indirectly, and incidentally, in preparation for an essay or a translation.

As for Sacred History, that, of course, enters not at all.

And so the new generations are by way of remaining ignorant of all the sensibilities, the morality, the mysticism of the soul of ancient peoples.

For centuries, men pursued, cultivated, an ideal. Of this ideal, their customs, their life, both private and public, were a more or less direct reflection. The new generations will know nothing of it.

I am speaking now not so much of the religious point of view; I consider here only the harm done to the culture.

Museums are filled with works inspired by religious history, by mythology, the Bible, the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles. It will not be long before they become meaningless to thronging crowds of visitors.

The history of the life of Christ used to be familiar to the people as well as to the cultivated classes. Now only salient facts seem to be known: the Birth in the stable, the Last Supper, the Judgment before Pilate, the Cross. The Ascension is confused with the Assumption, the Annunciation with the Visitation.

I have questioned young people about Joachim, St.

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Anne, and Elizabeth. They confessed to me their ignorance. And yet they did not come from atheistic circles.

It has been of these young people, first of all, that I have thought while writing the Life of Jesus. I had in mind also persons who do not go to church, who therefore know practically nothing about the Gospels and the story of Christ. They are aware of the fact that a whole domain—spiritual, literary, artistic—is closed to them. They would like to know but are wary of the work of priest or pastor. Doubtless they have read Renan's book. But these people have not had the whole story. For Renan rejected everything that had the appearance of legend, everything that did not offer a scientific guarantee or was not at least within the realm of scientific truth. He did not in the slightest degree help us to make out the symbols and the images of the art of the Middle Ages.

Modern Catholic exegesis sets aside a number of the legends clustering about the person of Jesus, the Virgin, and St. Joseph. It is concerned with putting sacred texts into harmony with contemporaneous criticism. Upon this point I neither discuss nor comment. Wishing to instruct—not convince—I follow tradition.

In no sense do I pretend to have made a critical revision of the Gospels; that has been done often enough!

Here is my aim: to permit to all—with instruction as the objective—the reading of the books of the New Testament. The task is less easy than one would imagine. The writers of the four Gospels are redundant. They supplement each other but do not always agree.

To read the books one after another is tiresome and leads one off the track. Often the obscurity of the narrative is a new element of confusion. I have made every effort to coördinate them, to forge a single unit, and to

make this version as simple, as clear, and as attractive as possible. No pedantic notes at the bottom of the page, no useless comments. Explanations necessary for the comprehension of a fact or a parable I have incorporated in appropriate places. The text itself I have respected as much as possible in order to place before the eyes of the reader St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John.

There is in the Bible great literary and poetic beauty. It has inspired me each time that it seemed necessary to add to the Gospels. I have borrowed from the Psalms and from Old Testament vocabulary and imagery, notably in connection with Salome and Mary Magdalene. I have been inspired by the work of the artists of the Middle Ages. I have transcribed the rules of Liturgy with the thought that the public for whom my work is meant would be grateful for this supplementary information and for the support that comes through art.

The prophets had an enormous influence upon the life of Christ. Jesus and the writers of the Gospels quote them frequently; but in the quoting modifications have crept in. In almost every case I have reëstablished the passages according to the prophets themselves.

Further, I felt I should draw upon the Apocryphal Gospels. One of their translators, Gustave Brunet, wrote:

> The Church, with reason, rejected certain legends in the Apocryphal Gospels on account of non-authenticity. These legends, although they are non-authentic, offer no doctrine contrary to the faith. The Greek Church admitted them in part, and in our day Christians of Egypt and of Asia do not contest them. Far from remaining sterile they had for long centuries a powerful and fruitful influence upon the development of poetry and the arts; the epic poems, the dramatists, the painters, the sculptors

of the Middle Ages made no mistake in drawing heavily upon them.

This explains why I have not hesitated to include here some of the legends, the most popular, the most beautiful. The rest offer only childish and irrelevant fancies. To avoid misleading my readers I have starred every passage in this book not taken from the canonical Gospels; for I have borrowed from other parts of the Bible, the Acts of the Apostles, the Apocryphal Gospels, legendary texts of the Middle Ages, and from historians, both ancient and modern. The longer insertions are indicated in foot-notes. I have called this book "The Radiant Story of Jesus" in order that there might be no surprises, no confusion.

Need I add that I have not sought to dazzle? The attempt to be literary—and by that I mean embroidery on the part of the imagination or the easy trick of picturesqueness—is out of place here. I wanted my work to be simple and measured.

Those who know the Gospels will recognize what I have done; they will see patience, good faith, respect, and effort: I say it in all humility. For the others it will be enough that they read me.

A.S.

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I

CHILDHOOD

◈ HEROD ◈

In those days there lived in Jerusalem a wicked man called Herod. The Romans had helped him to steal the throne of David, and he feared for his life and for his crown.

Since he was afraid, he was cruel. He had had put to death his father-in-law and then his wife Marian, whom he loved.

He ordered the execution of his three sons. Likewise ministers, servants.

At his command three hundred chiefs of the army were stoned, killed like dogs.

Now this wicked man lived through miserable days. Gold and precious stones glistened upon the purple of his garments. He built a beautiful palace for himself. Since the glorious days of great King Solomon, never had a prince of Israel lived in such magnificence. But he was unhappy, for hatred encircled him and rottenness was within him.

To punish him for crime and impiety God hurt him in the flesh. He was covered with sores. A slow fire, which could not be seen from without, burned in him. He was

always thirsty, always hungry. Nothing satisfied him. His feet were swollen and livid and could not bear his weight. His breath was far from sweet.

Rottenness was in his soul.

In the latter days of his life, instead of turning his thoughts toward Heaven, Herod nourished himself with pride. He decided in advance that his dead body must receive honor. Whether they would or not, the people should be obliged to shed real tears.

There should be blood upon his grave as well as upon his throne.

To win the hearts of the Jews, however, he restored to Samaria, the ancient capital of the Kingdom of Israel, her former splendor. He undertook the restoration of the Temple erected by Solomon to the glory of the Eternal.

But the Jews continued to scorn him.*

◆ JERUSALEM ◆

From a distance Jerusalem had the appearance of a mass of houses, white and terraced. Two palaces dominated the city, that of Herod and the palace of the Eternal, all marble and gold.

Three high ramparts inclosed four hills: Zion, Acra, Bezetha, and Moriah. And it took an hour to walk around the city, where seventy thousand inhabitants were crowded together like wheat in a measure.

The palace of Herod was built of priceless stone: large blocks, cut to measure, sawed with a saw, to make foundations for cornices.

The cedar forests of Lebanon gave the beams.

And there were capitals and columns of cast bronze, as in the monuments of the Greeks and the Romans.

When he decided upon the restoration of the Temple Herod had been reigning for eighteen years. It was his will that the new dwelling-place of the Eternal, by reason of its proportions and richness, should make men forget the Temple of Solomon.

To fetch the stones, which were bought at great price, cut to measure, were needed a thousand carts. For two years ten thousand artisans and one thousand priests, wise in the art of building, were at work.

After eight years the Temple was not yet finished. Strange to relate, during all that time rain fell only at night.

The upper part of the house of the Eternal was faced with white marble. Blue veins in the marble made the house of the Eternal look like a snow-covered mountain or a moving sea.

All those that served the Temple were lodged in buildings of beautiful polished stones, red and yellow: one red stone, one yellow stone, like a checker-board.

At the cornices hung bunches of grapes and foliage made of gold.

Above the portals, stretched between the columns, were thick tapestries upon which purple flowers bloomed. And the white marble columns were massive. Three men with arms outstretched could scarcely encircle them.

To penetrate the house of the Eternal one crossed three terraces and three courts. The third was reserved for the Levites. The second was the gathering-place of the Israelites. Gentiles, pagans, and foreigners could go no farther than the first terrace, the largest of the three.

The inside of the house of the Eternal was no less rich than the outside. In the vestibule gold was everywhere.

And beautiful hangings from Babylon. The next part was open only to the priests. It was called the Holy Place. Here was an altar, of cedar covered with gold, like the scales of a fish. On the altar, morning and night, incense made of seven plants burned before the Lord. The thick smoke rose straight as a column, and the perfume was so pungent that it caused goats to sneeze for several miles around.

The sacred part of the Temple was the Holy of Holies. Formerly the Holy of Holies sheltered the ark made by Moses upon the command and according to the directions of the Eternal. Now it contained only the stone upon which the ark had rested. The Jews believed that this stone was the first work of the Creator. That is why they called it "the foundation stone."

The Temple was more than the house of the Eternal: the faithful thronged it—merchants, speechifiers, beggars. The Jews of Jerusalem had made of the divine sanctuary a bazaar, a cattle-market, a bank, a place for public discussion.

Each year more than three hundred thousand sheep were offered up in sacrifice upon the altar. They say that at the Passover the men performing the sacrifices used to stand in blood half-way up their legs.

Such was the spectacle before the eyes of a pilgrim. If he were pious and simple, it saddened him to see that the house of the Eternal, with the interested complicity of the priests, had been changed into a business house, a temple of business, a cave of robbers.

Many years before Herod the tyrant reigned over Jerusalem, more than seven centuries before, in the days of Joatham, Achaz, and Ezekias, kings of Judah, the word

of the Lord was addressed to Isaiah, son of Amos, and to Micah the Morasthite.

And Isaiah the prophet said unto Israel in the name of the Eternal:

"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

"For unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called the Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." [1]

"The Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son." [2]

And Micah the prophet said to Israel in the name of the Eternal:

"Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousand cities of Judah, out of thee shall come the one that is to be ruler in Israel." [3]

◈ ELISABETH AND ZACHARIAS ◈

There was a priest called Zacharias, of the family of Abia. His wife was of the race of Aaron and she was called Elisabeth.

They lived in the village called Youttah, which is in the mountain of Judah, not far from Jerusalem.

Both were just before God. They followed faithfully the commandments of the Lord. But they were unhappy because they had no children. Elisabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years.

[1] Isaiah, ix.
[2] Isaiah, vii.
[3] Micah, v.

Now it happened that according to the way of the priests it was Zacharias's turn to offer incense upon the altar. And he went up to the Temple.

Under the porticoes the multitudes were praying.

Zacharias entered the Holy Place. At the right of the altar there was standing an angel. A long green robe covered his Heavenly body, and his wings were purple and gold.

Zacharias was afraid.

"Fear not," said the angel, "for your prayer is answered. Elisabeth, your wife, will have a son, and you shall call him John. He will bring you joy, and others will rejoice over his birth, because he shall be great before the Lord. He will drink neither wine nor beer, and the Holy Spirit will dwell in him even from the womb of his mother.

"He shall convert a number of the children of Israel to the Lord their God; and he shall walk before him in the spirit and in the virtue of Eli, to incline the hearts of fathers toward their children and to lead the doubtful to the wisdom of the just, in order to prepare the people for their Lord."

Zacharias asked the angel:

"How shall I know? I am old and my wife is advanced in years!"

The angel answered:

"I am Gabriel, the strength of God, one of the seven archangels who sit before the Lord. I was sent to speak to you announcing good news.

"And you shall be dumb. You shall speak no more until the day when these things have happened, because you do not believe my words which shall be accomplished in their own time."

Meanwhile on the terrace the people were waiting for Zacharias. They were marveling that he delayed in the Temple. When he came out he could not say a word. But with signs he made them understand that he had seen a vision. And he remained dumb.

The days of his service were finished, and he returned to his house in Youttah. Sometime after, Elisabeth conceived.

"This is what the Lord has done to remove from me the blame that was mine before men," said she.

But to avoid curiosity and remarks she stayed in her house and was hidden during five months.

In the sixth month, Mary of Nazareth, a relative of hers, came to see her and wished to stay at her house.

◈ ANNE AND JOACHIM ◈

When these wonderful things were happening, God deigned to manifest himself to men; in his pity he would send them his own son to take away their sins.[1]

Now there was at Jerusalem a man called Joachim, of the tribe of Judah. He took his flocks out to pasture, and he feared God, in the simplicity and goodness of his heart.

He used what he had to help the needy. Lambs, sheep, wool—all that he possessed he divided into three parts. He gave one to widows, orphans, strangers, and the poor; those who served God received a second part; the third was for himself and his family.

And God multiplied his flocks. Among the whole

[1] According to C. Michel, P. Peeters, and G. Brumet, "Apocryphes": the pre-Gospel of James, the pseudo-Gospel of Matthew, the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of the Childhood.

people of Israel there was not his equal. When he was twenty years old he took for his wife Anne, daughter of Issachar, who was of the race of David. He lived with her for twenty years but had neither son nor daughter.

On a feast day he went up to the Temple, and there Joachim was among those who were offering incense to the Lord. A scribe called Reuben came to him.

"Your place is not among the faithful who make sacrifices to the Lord, for he has not given you posterity in Israel."

Joachim left the Temple weeping. Instead of returning to his house he gathered together his shepherds and his flocks and went away in the mountain. He set up his tent, and he fasted forty days and forty nights. And he said to himself:

"I shall go down neither for food ncr for drink as long as the Lord my God has not visited me: prayer shall be my meat and my drink."

Then he prayed to God:

"Remember me, Lord, according to thy pity and thy justice. Perform in me an act of thy loving-kindness, as thou hast done unto our ancestor, Abraham, to whom in his old age thou hast given a child, a benediction, son of the promise, Isaac, his only offspring, pledge of comfort to the race."

For five long months Anne heard nothing of Joachim. She lamented:

"Lord God, all-powerful, thou hast refused sons unto me, and now thou hast separated me from my husband."

While she was weeping and praying, prostrate upon the ground in the garden, she raised her eyes and saw a nest of sparrows in a laurel tree. More tears and lamentations:

"Alas for the body that bore me that I am now an object of scorn in Israel!

"Alas! Alas!

"The birds have little ones to sing sweetly before thee, O Lord.

"Alas! Alas!

"The wild beasts of the desert have little ones to play gracefully before thee, O Lord.

"Alas! Alas!

"The fish in the river have little ones to dart and shine before thee, O Lord.

"Alas! Alas!

"The trees of the earth in their seasons bear fruit to ripen before thee, O Lord.

"And I can be compared not to the birds of the air, nor to the beasts of the desert, nor to the fish of the waters, nor to the fruits of the earth Alas! My hands lift not the fruit of my body before thee, O Lord!"

The Lord pitied her tears. An angel from Paradise came down to her.

"Anne," he said to her, "fear not, the Eternal has heard thy prayer: thou shalt conceive, and the child that shall be born of thee will be admired from century to century."

Then he disappeared before her eyes.

Trembling, Anne entered her house and threw herself upon her couch. There she stayed as if dead all the day and all the night. And her prayer rose to Heaven.

"By the life of the Lord my God," she said, "if I bear a son or a daughter, I will consecrate the child to the Lord my God, for his service and his glory."

At this time a young man appeared to Joachim who was guarding his flocks in the mountain. And the young man said:

"Fear not, I am an angel sent from God. I appeared to-day to your wife as she was weeping and praying. And I consoled her. Go down from here and find her. She will conceive a daughter. The child will dwell in the house of the Eternal, and the Holy Spirit will be in her. Her happiness will be greater than that of all women, so that they will say that no woman like her ever was before her. Nor will there ever appear such an one after her in this world."

And Joachim, prostrating himself before the angel, said:

"If I have found grace in thine eyes, sit in my tent and bless me, for I am thy servant."

"Thou art my brother," said the angel, "not my servant, for we are servants of the same Master. My food is celestial, and what I eat and what I drink is beyond the ken of mortals. Do not ask me then to come into thy tent, but what thou wouldst give me, offer that in sacrifice to the Eternal."

Joachim took a lamb without blemish and sacrificed it. And the angel of God rose toward Heaven in the smoke of the sacrifice.

Calling his shepherds around him, Joachim told them what had happened. The flocks were assembled, and the men and the animals went down from the mountains. They traveled for thirty days. They were approaching Jerusalem when an angel of the Lord came to Anne, saying:

"Go to the gate of gold, to meet your husband, for he is coming."

Anne put on her wedding dress and, with her women, went out in haste. Standing near the gate she waited a

long time for Joachim. Suddenly a cloud of dust was seen. It was Joachim and the flocks. Anne forgot her weariness. She ran to meet him who was coming. She clung to him.

"I was a widow, but that is over now," said she; "I was barren, but I shall conceive."

Now, when the time was accomplished, Anne bore a child. And she asked the midwife, "What is it?"

"A daughter."

"My soul is glorified this day," cried Anne.

And she gave her breast to the child, who was called Mary.

◈ MARY AND JOSEPH ◈

The little girl Mary grew. Her wisdom and her beauty were admired by everybody, and she was the pride of her mother. Anne used to take her in her arms and cover her with caresses.

"Mary, sainted mother of the virgins. Source of growth and beauty, branch of a noble tree, from thee the dawn shall rise, the morning star of light, like unto the moon, more than a star, light of the day, more than the splendor of the sun; sunrise of the east!"

So spake Anne.

When the child was three years old her parents presented her at the Temple to live with the virgins who used to spend the nights and the days praising God.

Joachim offered a white lamb in sacrifice upon the altar.

The little girl Mary was taken before the altar of the Lord. She ran up the fifteen steps. Another child would have returned to her parents. Mary did not go back.

Everybody was astonished; the priests themselves held her in admiration.

The High Priest seated her upon the third level of the tabernacle. And the grace of the Lord God descended upon her.

Mary danced on her little feet, and every one cherished her in the house of the Eternal.

She was only three years old, but because of her wisdom and the ardor with which she praised God she might have been taken for a grown-up person.

The expression of her face was radiant and pure, like the snow.

And here is how she lived: from dawn until the third hour she remained in prayer; from the third hour to the ninth she busied herself with weaving and spinning wool; but from the ninth hour she used to pray without ceasing until the moment when the angel of the Lord appeared unto her.

The angel served at table.

Other angels used to come from Heaven to speak to her and to sing cradle songs.

When Mary spoke, her words were full of grace and the people about her knew that God had touched her lips.

And those who saw her said:

"Who is she that like the smoke of incense seems to float above the others, all fragrant with virtue?"

None of her companions knew how to sing the songs of David as did she:

"Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the Heavens; praise him in the heights.

"Praise ye him, all his angels; praise ye him, all his hosts.

"Praise ye him, sun and moon.

"Praise him, ye Heavens of Heavens, and ye waters that be above the Heavens.

"Let them praise the name of the Lord; for he commanded, and they were created.

"He hath also stablished them for ever and ever; he hath made a decree which shall not pass.

"Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, praise the Lord, and all the deeps:

"Fire and hail, snow and ice of winter, stormy wind, all ye praise him in his service:

"Mountains and all hills, fruitful trees and cedars of Lebanon:

"Wild beasts of the desert and all cattle, creeping things and flying fowl:

"Kings of the earth and all people, princes and all judges of the earth:

"Both young men and maidens, old men and children:

"Let them all praise the name of the Lord:

"For his name alone is high; his glory is above the earth and Heaven.

"The Eternal fortifieth his people. Praised be the Lord through the voice of Israel, a people near unto him. Halleluiah!" [1]

Mary grew in years. She was twelve years old, and the time of adolescence had come. As it was written that no woman should offend the house of the Eternal with her presence, the priests gathered together.

"What shall we do with Mary?"

They did not know what to say, for Joachim and Anne, the parents of Mary, were no more.

[1] Psalms, cxlviii.

Then the High Priest put on his priestly robes and went into the Holy of Holies.

The golden crown upon which was written, "Holiness before the Lord," was upon his head. His robe was golden and purple, scarlet and deep crimson, and the border was made of fine linen ornamented with twelve little bells, golden and tinkling. The breast piece with its four rows of precious stones glistened. There was one stone for each of the tribes of Israel. In the first row there was a garnet, a topaz, and an emerald; in the second row, a carbuncle, a sapphire, and a blue agate; in the third row, an opal, an agate, and an amethyst; and in the fourth row, there was a chrysolite, an onyx, and a jasper.

In the peace of the sanctuary the High Priest knelt before the Lord. He prayed for Mary, imploring God to inspire him. And a voice speaking into his ear said:

"Go out and gather the men of the line of David, the widowers and those who have not yet taken a woman, call them to the Temple. Let each one come with a rod in his hand. Take the rods and place them in the tabernacle. It will happen that the rod of the one I have chosen will burst into bloom."

And thus it was done. Early the next day all those who were without wives went up to the Temple, according to the command. The High Priest gathered together the rods and placed them before the Lord, in the tabernacle of the Holy of Holies. After lighting sacrificial fire he praised the Lord God.

While he was praying an angel appeared.

"Look among the rods that are here," said the angel, "find the smallest one, and there you will see a sign."

And the High Priest went out to return the rods. In

the last row of men there was one who was modest and a little shy because he was no longer young. The smallest rod belonged to him. As he took it in his hand, behold, it was covered with tender leaves, buds, blossoms, and almonds. And from it a white dove flew away with the soft sound of wings.

The people marveled. But the High Priest said:

"Since thou, and thou alone, of all the tribe of Judah hath been chosen of God, receive the virgin of the Lord under thy protection."

Now the man was Joseph, of the House of David, who plied the humble trade of carpenter at Nazareth in Galilee.

Marveling at what was happening to him, Joseph said to the priests:

"I am not young, and I have sons; why confide this child to me?"

The High Priest answered:

"Fear the Lord, and remember Dathan, Abiram, and Korah who were swallowed up within the earth because they disobeyed. Have a care lest the same thing happen unto thee."

"I do not wish to go against the will of God," said Joseph; "therefore I shall watch over the child until the Lord maketh known which one of my sons is to take her to wife."

"It is to thee that Mary is given; she must not be united to another."

Joseph took her in marriage.

When the day came for the holy ceremony, Mary prepared herself according to the custom. The night before,

although Joseph had not known her, she was purified with water. Her friends in the Temple, virgins like herself, came to help her. They bathed her in perfumes; they put on her a white robe embroidered in gold and necklaces and bracelets that made a happy sound as she walked.

Around her waist was clasped the belt that the husband alone might untie. Then on her forehead the young girls put a wreath of flowers and beads. And they covered her with veils.*

Thus arrayed Mary was very beautiful. Her cheeks under the veils were like the two halves of a pomegranate; her hair was as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead; her eyes were called the rivers of Heshbon, near the door of Bath-Rabbim, and her breath was like apple blossoms.[1] A lily among lilies, she breathed purity in the midst of the virgins who were there, each with a lamp in her hand.

Under the guardianship of an attendant, she waited for Joseph to come.

At sundown he arrived clothed in his richest tunic, a golden turban crowned with myrtle and roses on his head. A troop of singers and players of flutes and drums went before him. Ten of his friends were about him carrying palms, and there were also men of his family with torches.

Joseph took Mary by the hand. He slipped the ring on her finger and placed himself under a canopy made of stalks of papyrus, to which were hung a thousand different objects. He conducted her, with a sound of song and instruments, through the narrow streets. Spectators were gathered there while women upon the terraces cried words of welcome as he took her to her new home. There he had had prepared for his guests wines and fruits and cooked meats.*

[1] Song of Songs.

◈ THE ANNUNCIATION ◈

At Nazareth Mary lived with peace in her soul, occupying herself with work and prayer. She had become a woman, but Joseph continued to respect her. Was she not promised to the Lord her God?

Often she was alone, for Joseph went away to the villages round about to do carpentering. He was a skilful artisan and did not lack work. In his absence Mary spun wool and flax; she looked after the house, mended the clothes of her husband, prepared the meals, went to draw water from the fountain.*

She had lived in Nazareth for six months when one evening she went to the fountain. She was preparing to put the well filled jar of cool water upon her shoulder, when she seemed to hear some one speaking near her. She saw nothing. But a voice was saying:

"Mary, full of grace, I salute thee."

Mary was troubled as she hurried back to the house. She said nothing to Joseph.

The next day as soon as she was alone she retired to her own room. She was worried and needed to think. She prayed. She could not help remembering the mysterious voice near the fountain. And she asked for help from Heaven.

"O Lord, look upon me in thy pity; deliver me from temptation; remove from me the traps and the ruses of the Evil One." *

The voice came again:

"Mary, full of grace, I salute thee. The Lord is with thee. Thou art blessed among women."

"My God, I am thy servant," said Mary, trembling.

There was no doubt now that the Lord her God wished to give her a command. Raising her eyes, she saw a handsome young man at the threshold of the door. His face shone like snow in the sunlight. Mary was not afraid, for she had often seen the faces of angels in the Temple, but the words of the stranger troubled her. She asked herself what the salutation could mean.*

The angel spoke:

"Mary, fear not. Thou hast found grace before God. Thou shalt conceive and bring forth a son to whom thou shalt give the name of Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High; the Lord God will give unto him the throne of David, his father. He shall reign eternally over the house of Jacob, and his reign shall have no end."

Mary saw that the young man had wings of gold and of fire, and she knew that Gabriel, the archangel of the Lord, was before her.*

Astonished—for she was a virgin and had made a vow to remain a virgin all her life—Mary asked:

"How shall that be, since I know no man?"

The angel said to her:

"The Holy Spirit shall descend upon thee, and the virtue of the Most High shall cover thee. That is why the holy child born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

"And thy cousin Elisabeth has also conceived a son, in spite of her age. And it is now the sixth month with her whom they called barren. For nothing is impossible with God."

In humility Mary crossed her hands on her breast and said:

"Behold the servant of the Lord. Let it be with me according to thy word."

The angel went away.

A ray of light filtered into the room through the open door. At the window a great white lily gleamed.

Mary said nothing to Joseph.*

◈ THE VISITATION ◈

After a little while Mary decided to visit Elisabeth at Youttah, in the mountains. She knew the miracle that was being accomplished with the wife of Zacharias; no doubt she wished to confide what had happened to her. Within a colored shawl Mary folded a dress, some linen, and a veil woven by her own hand. She would give the veil to Elisabeth.

Joseph placed her on a little donkey—it was all they had—and accompanied her as far as the last houses in Nazareth. The sky was clear, and Mary felt a great secret happiness.*

Elisabeth was not expecting Mary to come to Youttah, and her arrival was a surprise. When she heard Mary's greeting the child within her trembled with joy. And Mary's condition was revealed, for the Holy Spirit dwelt in her.

"Blessed art thou among women, and the fruit of thy body is blessed," said she. Then: "How is it that the mother of my Lord has come to me?"

Mary said nothing. She was astonished by these words, confused to have been received with such great respect. For she was young and Elisabeth was advanced in age.

Then Elisabeth continued:

"Happy is she that hath believed. The things the Lord hath told her shall come to pass."

Mary, facing the light, opened her arms, raised her eyes toward Heaven, and said:

"My soul doth magnify the Lord. My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour, for He hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. Henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things. His holy name and his mercy shall be from age to age upon those that fear him. He hath showed strength with his arm. He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

"He hath brought down the powerful and exalted them of low degree.

"He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away.

"As a sign of his pity for Abraham and the children of Abraham, he hath taken Israel, his servant, under his protection for the ages, as he promised to our fathers."

For the Lord had promised to Abraham that he would establish an alliance with his son Isaac and with the posterity of Isaac.

Mary stayed three months with Elisabeth. After that she returned to her house.

◆ THE BIRTH OF JOHN ◆

Now when the time came Elisabeth brought forth a son. Her relatives and friends rejoiced with her.

On the eighth day, according to Jewish custom, the child was circumcised.

Zacharias, the elderly husband of Elisabeth, had become dumb because he doubted divine pity. He had also

become deaf. Therefore he was prevented from operating upon the child himself, as the ceremony was accompanied by sacred ritual which he could not pronounce.

When it came time to give a name to the child, those present proposed calling him Zacharias, like his father. Elisabeth said:

"No. He shall be called John."

All were astonished.

"No one of thy family bears this name!"

They consulted Zacharias, making signs, since he did not hear. And as he could not speak he took up tablets upon which he wrote:

"His name is John."

The surprise was general. Now, all in the same moment, the ears of Zacharias were unstopped, his mouth was opened, his tongue was loosed, he blessed God, and inspired by the Holy Spirit he prophesied:

"Blessed, blessed is the Lord, the God of Israel.

"He hath visited and redeemed his people.

"As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, he hath sent an invincible arm to the House of David. It will be for our salvation, like a horn upon the head of a bull.

"He would deliver us from the brutal hand of those who hate us,

"To perform the mercy promised to our fathers in memory of the oath which he swore to our Father Abraham:

"That we should be saved from our enemies, so that we might worship Him without fear, in justice and holiness, all the days of our life.

"And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the

Lord: thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways,

"To give knowledge of salvation unto the people by the remission of their sins.

"Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us.

"To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

Hearing these words, all were full of fear and admiration.

Now all these things were told in the mountain country of Judea, and those who knew kept them in their hearts.

"What will come from this child?" they said.

The hand of the Lord was upon him.

And he grew and lived obscurely against the day when his voice would cry in the desert.

This is the genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham:

Abraham begat Isaac; Isaac begat Jacob; Jacob begat Judas and his brethren;

Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; Phares begat Esrom; Esrom begat Aram;

Aram begat Aminadab; Aminadab begat Naasson; Naasson begat Salmon;

Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; Booz begat Obed of Ruth; Obed begat Jesse;

Jesse begat David the king. King David of Bath-Sheba who had been the wife of Urias begat Solomon; Solomon begat Roboam; Roboam begat Abia; Abia begat Asa;

Asa begat Josaphat; Josaphat begat Joram; Joram begat Ozias; Ozias begat Joatham; Joatham begat Achaz; Achaz begat Ezekias;

Ezekias begat Manasses; Manasses begat Amon; Amon begat Josias;

Josias begat Joachim; Joachim begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon;

And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; Salathiel begat Zorobabel;

Zorobabel begat Abiud; Abiud begat Eliakim; Eliakim begat Azor;

Azor begat Sadoc; Sadoc begat Achim; Achim begat Eliud;

Eliud begat Eleazar; Eleazar begat Matthan; Matthan begat Jacob;

And Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.

◆ THE NATIVITY ◆

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise:

When Mary left Youttah to go back to Nazareth, Elisabeth embracing her said:

"Go in peace. Fear not, for the Lord is with thee."

But Mary was troubled. She wondered what Joseph would say when he learned of her condition.

And Joseph was impressed by the change in her.

"It seems to me," said he, "that thou hast lost thy childish grace."

Suddenly he had a revelation of that which had come to pass. And he cried:

"Alas! What hast thou done?" [1]

He tore his beard and his hair; he rolled in the dust.

"Woe is me!" he groaned. "Curses upon my old age! How now shall I dare to look into the faces of men? The story of Adam is repeated in me. At the moment when Adam was glorifying God, the serpent came, and, finding Eve alone, he abused her. Has this come to me?"

Mary wept. She knew that Joseph would refuse to believe her. She only said:

"Do not judge me until you know. I have not sinned."

And she went away into her room. Lying there with her face down, she prayed:

"Lord, my God, in pity guard the honor of thy handmaiden. Thou knowest, Lord, that it is hard for men to believe; manifest thy divine will, and keep thine handmaiden under the protection of thy holy name."

But Joseph was still the prey of profound sadness. He neither ate nor drank. And he decided to put Mary away. But as he was just and kind, he resolved to act secretly, in order to spare Mary from fingers pointing at her.

Then he fell asleep. And, lo, as he slept an angel of the Lord appeared to him.

"Joseph, son of David," said the angel, "fear not to recognize Mary as your wife. She hath conceived of the Holy Spirit, and she will bring forth a son whom you will call Jesus; for he will save his people from their sins."

[1] According to "Apocryphes," by P. Peeters and Charles Michel.

Now the Lord had spoken to Israel, through the mouth of Isaiah his prophet:

"A virgin shall conceive, and she shall bring forth a son; and he shall be called Emmanuel, God with us."

It explained all that had happened.

Waking, Joseph gave thanks to God. Then he went and found Mary, saying unto her:

"I have sinned against thee, for I doubted thy virginity."

He told her of the vision, and he kept her in his house.*

But it happened that the High Priest heard of Mary's condition. He sent for the husband and wife. They appeared before him.

"Why hast thou done this thing?" he asked of Joseph.

"By the life of the Lord my God," replied Joseph, "I am not responsible."

"Mary," said the High Priest, "why hast thou done this thing? Thou who hast been raised in the Temple, thou who hast received food from the hand of an angel, thou who hast heard holy hymns, thou who hast danced before the Eternal—why hast thou soiled thy soul and forgotten the Lord thy God?"

"By the life of the Lord my God, I am free from sin," replied Mary, weeping.

The High Priest took holy water in an earthen vessel, and he took dust from the floor and put it into the water and gave it to her to drink.

He said unto Mary:

"If no man have lain with thee, be thou free from this bitter water that causes the curse. But if thou be defiled, thou shalt be the object of universal execration: and this

water shall go into thy bowels, to make thy belly to swell and thy thigh to rot." [1]

"Amen! Amen!" said Joseph and Mary.

And they drank the holy water, and no harm came to them.

The High Priest, marveling, understood thus that they were pure and there was no sin in them.

Mary and Joseph went home full of joy and glorifying the Eternal.

At that time an edict of Cæsar Augustus required each one to go to his own country for the census. This census was made by Cyrenius, the governor. Joseph was obliged to go away with Mary to Bethlehem, a city near Jerusalem.

The Jewish custom required that the taxation of the children of Israel be done by family and by tribe, in the very place from which each tribe came. Now, Joseph was of the House of David, and David came from Bethlehem.

It was a great bother for Joseph to go to Bethlehem, but there was no way out of it. Although it was near Mary's time, she decided to go with him. One morning, at dawn, they set out, Joseph holding the bridle of the donkey upon which he had seated Mary.

It was winter-time. Muddy roads made the journey hard. Crossing the valley of Esdremon, Joseph and his companion reached En-Gannim, Sichem, Jacob's well. At Jerusalem they rested. Mary felt tired. At last they came to Bethlehem, where modest houses huddled on the summit of a chalky hill, covered with fig trees, olive trees, and dry vine branches.

[1] Numbers, v.

There was a crowd of people at Bethlehem because of the taxation. At the inn near the edge of the town, Joseph and Mary found no room. Joseph went from door to door.

"My wife is with child; have pity upon her. I cannot leave her outdoors. Night has come, it is cold, and it is beginning to snow."

But no one would take them in.

Not far from the inn was a cave that was used as a stable. Joseph decided to spend the night there. The donkey was tied in a corner near a big red-brown ox; Mary prepared some straw for herself. Scarcely had she lain down when she felt that the child was coming.

Crazed with worry, Joseph ran out to find a midwife. And, lo, everything around about him was motionless and listening: the birds did not sing and they did not fly; with his hands in his tray, the baker kneaded no more; on the road the flocks that were coming home to the village stopped and moved no more; the shepherds remained with their staffs in the air, motionless; and the dogs barked no longer; and the water in the fountain did not flow; the children did not play; the women did not quarrel; and it seemed to him that the earth was lifting toward the sky and that the sky was brooding over the earth, to give light from all its stars.

And as Joseph hurried on he met a woman who asked him:

"Man, where are you going?"

Joseph said:

"I am looking for a Jewish midwife."

The woman said:

"Art thou of the race of Israel?"

Joseph said:

"Yes, I am of the race of Israel and of the House of David."

The woman said:

"And she who is in labor, where is she?"

Joseph said:

"She is there, in the cave, for we could find no place to stay."

The woman said:

"Who is this woman in labor in the cave?"

Joseph said:

"It is Mary, who was reared in the Temple of the Lord. The dove designated me for her protection, and I took her in marriage, but I have not known her. She has conceived of the Holy Ghost."

The woman said:

"Is this true?"

Joseph said:

"Come and see."

He led her to the cave. Their sight seemed dim because all about them was veiled with a luminous mist. Feeling their way to the place where Mary had been, Joseph and the woman saw the young mother holding in her arms a little child.

Then Joseph praised the Lord. The midwife lying upon the ground cried:

"My soul this day has been glorified, because my eyes have seen the miracle; a Virgin has brought forth a child."

And straightway the mist faded away like the dew in springtime. A great light shone in the cave, a light so clear that eyes could not bear it. And a lovely glow circled the head of the little child. And the angels of Heaven were singing for joy. Some had harps, and others golden

bowls full of perfumes. And the perfumes were the prayers of the angels.[1]

Now these things came to pass on the night of the twenty-fourth of December, which has been called Christmas eve, because a Saviour was born to the world.

◈ THE SHEPHERDS ◈

That same night shepherds, sleeping in the fields with their flocks, suddenly saw an angel of the Lord coming toward them. And at the same moment the glory of the Lord shone round about them like a cloud of gold.*

"Lord God of Israel, pity us!"

"Fear not," said the angel, "for I bring you great joy which shall be to all the people of Israel.

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. Go! In a stable, lying upon the straw of a manger, you will find a little child. Salute him; it is your Saviour, Christ the Lord!"

And a multitude of the Heavenly host praised God with the angel; the Thrones, the Cherubim and the Seraphim, the Powers, the Dominations, the Forces and the Virtues, the Principalities, the Archangels and the Angels praised the Lord:

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men!"

Before the eyes of the shepherds the Heavenly host went away.

The shepherds said one to another:

"Let us go and see what has happened in Bethlehem."

And they found Mary and Joseph in the cave and the little child lying in the manger, for Mary had no other

[1] According to Peeters, "Evangile de l'Enfance."

place to put her child. They fell down and worshiped the child. As a witness of their love they gave a spotless lamb, some wool that had been carefully washed, a cheese, and some sheep's milk with the foam still upon it.

And then they lighted a great bonfire of joy in the snow.

And all the doors of the houses in the neighborhood were opening. Men and women dressed hastily and came running.

"What is going on?"

They asked the shepherds, and they told them what they had heard and seen concerning the little child. The crowd pressed around the opening of the cave. And all wondered.

Now Mary heard all these things. She pondered them in her heart. She did not feel the cold. The humble stable seemed to her a thousand times more beautiful than the gilded room in a palace where kings of the earth are born. Silent, Joseph stood near-by. And the ox and the ass with their soft breath warmed the little child sleeping in the manger.[1]

◈ THE CIRCUMCISION ◈

When Moses brought back the children of Israel out of Egypt the Lord spoke to him:

"Sanctify unto me all the first-born among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast, and every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast, the males shall be the Lord's.[2]

"Thou shalt not redeem the firstling of the cow, nor

[1] The apocryphal Gospels.
[2] Exodus, Numbers.

the firstling of the sheep, nor the firstling of the goat: they shall be for the sacrifice. Thou shalt spill their blood on the altar, and thou shalt cause their fatness to smoke in fire, for the odor thereof is pleasant to the Lord.

"But the firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb or a goat. And if thou redeem him not, then shalt thou break his neck. Thou shalt redeem all the first-born of men with a yearling lamb."

The Lord spoke again to Moses:

"If a woman hath born a male child, then shall she be unclean seven days. The eighth day the child shall be circumcised. And during thirty-three days she shall touch no hallowed thing, and she shall not go into the sanctuary until the days of her purifying shall be fulfilled.

"And when the days of her purifying are fulfilled, she shall present herself to the priest; she shall give him five pieces of silver and a yearling lamb for a burnt offering; and a young pigeon or a turtle-dove for a sin offering.

"And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtle-doves or two young pigeons. The priest shall make an atonement for her before the Eternal. And she shall be clean." [1]

And the commandments of the Lord became the law for Israel.

Seven full days had passed since the moment when Mary had brought her child into the world. Joseph proceeded to the ceremony of circumcision and the child received the name Jesus, just as the angel had said when he appeared to Mary and to Joseph.

After thirty-three days Mary went to Jerusalem to present her child to the Lord. Joseph gave five pieces of

[1] Leviticus, xii.

silver to the priest and two turtle-doves which he bought in the court of the Temple. For he was too poor to give a yearling lamb.

The priest sprinkled the blood of the turtle-dove on the altar, dipped his finger in it and sprinkled it seven times before the tabernacle.

Then the turtle-doves were burned: their feathers, their flesh, their blood, their entrails with the excretions.

And the priest then took cedar wood, hyssop, and crimson and threw them into the midst of the fire.

And Mary and the child were clean.[1]

Now there was in Jerusalem a just and devout man called Simeon. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit dwelt in him. Although he was advanced in years, it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

The morning when Mary and Joseph presented themselves before the priest with the child to do for him after the custom of the law, Simeon, led by the Holy Spirit, came to the Temple. He was walking in the court of the Gentiles, mingling with the faithful, the strangers, and the merchants, stopping before the counters, exchanging greetings with Jews whom he knew. A strange restlessness which he kept to himself drew him toward the court of Israel. Poor people were there, bringing offerings in order to be purified: a man about forty years old, dressed like an honest workman, and a young woman, beautiful and shy, were there with a little child wrapped in swaddling clothes.

[1] Leviticus, xii.

Simeon approached them. He took the child and praised God, saying:

"O Lord, blessed is thy holy name. Thou hast delivered thy servant; thou makest his chains to drop away.

"Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy holy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared before the face of all people.

"I have seen the light which will lighten the nations and will be the glory of thy people Israel."

Joseph and Mary were surprised at first, and then they marveled. Simeon blessed them and said unto Mary:

"Behold thy child shall be a sanctuary; he shall be a stumbling-block and an offense upon which doubts shall be broken; he shall be a snare and a net into which the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall fall. He shall be rejected and contradicted, and the thoughts that some men hold locked up in their hearts shall be unveiled.

"As for thee, poor woman, a sword of sorrow shall pierce through thine own soul."

Scarcely had he finished these words when there came Anna, the prophetess. Anna was the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser, of whom Jacob said: "From Aser shall come savory bread fit for royal delight." And Moses: "Blessed be Aser among the sons of men; let him be agreeable with his brothers, and let him anoint his feet with oil." Anna was a widow. From the day when her husband took her as a bride until the day of his death, there passed seven years. And now her age was four score and four years. She departed not from the Temple but served God with fasting and prayer.

Advanced in years though she was, she prostrated herself before the little child.

"Praised be the Lord!" she said. "He has put into my heart more joy than dwells in the heart of those who have wheat and wine and plenty." *

And to all those who were waiting upon the redemption of Israel, she proclaimed the glorious name of Jesus.

◈ THE MAGI ◈

While these things were being accomplished, there appeared in the kingdom of the Persians a star. The splendor of it reminded men of the sun. The king and his ministers and the people wondered. The Magi, men who were powerful in wisdom and knowledge, were consulted.

"Rejoice," they said; "the King of kings is born. The God of gods, the Light of lights."

And three among them: Gaspar—he was twenty years old and beautiful as a woman; Balthasar—he was forty years old, his skin dark, and his beard blue-black; Melchior—he was seventy years old, with silvery hair and beard. They assembled their servants, had their camels prepared, and when the cock crowed set out on their way. And the guiding star went before them.

They crossed the Tigris, the Euphrates, the desert, and came around the Dead Sea. After four months of journeying, Jerusalem at last appeared before them, white upon her four hills.

The gold and precious things jingled and tinkled so that men marveled.

"From whence do you come?" men asked them.

"We are from the Orient."

"And what do you seek?"

"We would find the King of the Jews, now born in Judea."

Herod heard the news, and he was seized with fear. He knew he was surrounded by enemies. He called his chief priests about him and questioned them:

"Where should Christ be born?"

For he did not know that the prophets had foretold the coming of the Messiah.

"He that is to be the shepherd of the people of Israel shall come out of Bethlehem, in the land of Judah," said the priests. Then secretly Herod sent for the Magi to come to see him.

"Great is the power of him for whom you left your country. A great king, in truth he is the King of kings."

And so he spoke with them, feigning humility.

And he asked them about the wonderful star: where and when had it appeared unto them?

When the Magi had given him all the information he wanted he thanked them and said:

"Go even unto Bethlehem; inform yourselves about this little child. When you have seen him, see that I hear about it; and I will go and worship him."

The night was falling when the Magi were entering the gates of Jerusalem. The star continued to go before them.

When they arrived in Bethlehem they created a great stir. The entire population went out to admire them. Their robes were made of brocade, yellow as gold; upon their heads they wore high turbans covered with precious

stones; and the camels they were riding had marvelous harness, rich with Persian embroidery.

Now the star in the sky ceased moving.

Full of great joy the Magi came down from their mounts while their servants sounded trumpets, cymbals, zithers, and harps. And the kings of the Orient made their way into the cave. They were amazed that the King of kings was there like the poorest of the poor.

Mary, filled with fear, was holding the little child in her arms.

"Fear not," said the Magi, "we are here not to harm but to adore."

They bowed down before Jesus, who, looking at them, smiled.

Then the Magi went to their camels to find gifts: Melchior brought gold; Gaspar brought incense; Balthasar brought myrrh.

And the perfume of immortality was in the air.

When the Magi had worshiped they withdrew. After they had talked together they decided to go back to Jerusalem the next day, early in the morning, in order to tell King Herod all that they had seen.

Then they stretched out upon their rich rugs and fell asleep. But while they were sleeping they heard in their dreams a voice saying:

"O men of power and wisdom, who honor God, beware of the wicked man who reigns over Jerusalem. In his heart he has planned to put the little child to death. And he will cause you to perish in torture."

When they awakened, Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthasar resolved to leave Bethlehem secretly. And glorifying Christ, the God of the universe, and filled with

joy, they set out for their own country, following the road by which the Lord was leading them.[1]

Now Joseph was sleeping when an angel came to him in a dream.

The angel said unto him:

"Arise, take the little child and his mother, and flee into Egypt by the way of the desert. Thou shalt stay there until I tell thee to leave. For Herod has made a plan in his heart to put to death the little child."

Straightway Joseph came, awakened Mary, and repeated to her the words of the angel. Mary took Jesus, wrapped him in a warm tunic, and after Joseph had pulled the ass out of the stable she sat upon it with the little child.*

And they fled into Egypt, where they were to remain until the death of Herod.

And so there was fulfilled that which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet: "Out of Egypt have I called my son."

In Jerusalem Herod was waiting with impatience for the return of the Magi. When he learned that they had gone he flew into a rage. He threatened his chief of police that he would have him beaten to the naked bones if the fugitives were not brought back dead or alive.

But the camels of the Magi were swift, and the protection of the Lord was round about them.

Herod, as he was unable to identify the divine child, ordered a massacre of the male children in Bethlehem under the age of two years.

The mothers who had brought forth boy babies within two years were called, together with their little ones.

[1] Story of the Magi according to the apocryphal Gospels and St. Matthew.

Unsuspecting, they came to the appointed place, for they thought the summons might have to do with the taxation ordered by the Emperor Augustus. Soldiers surrounded them and, unmoved by their screams, seized the children. They crushed the heads against stone walls, they disemboweled them with swords.*

And so the prophecy spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled:

"Cries, lamentations, weeping, groaning, are heard upon the mountain; Rachel weeping for her children and without consolation because they are no more."

◈ THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT ◈

The fugitives had not long to stay in Egypt, but the time they spent there was enough for the accomplishment of surprising and marvelous things.[1]

One time the small ass upon which the Virgin Mary was riding with her divine son was feeling its way with its little hoofs, in the dust of a bad road.

The heat was great, and Mary was weary.

"Let us stop a moment in the shade of this tree," she said.

It was a palm tree in a field. Sitting there on the ground, the little child in her arms, she felt like tasting the fruit of the tree. But the dates hung very high, and Joseph could not reach them. And it happened that the branches bowed down to Mary, and she gathered as many dates as she could eat.

Another day Mary and Jesus were in front of a fine large building. And she was curious to know its purpose.

[1] According to the apocryphal Gospels.

Now it was a temple erected to three hundred and sixty-five idols to which men gave divine homage in sacrilegious ceremonies. A demon used to speak through the mouths of the idols, and the idols were magic statues. They had heads of gold, breasts of silver, bellies of brass, legs of iron. But their feet were made of clay.

And, lo, as Mary with her little child in her arms passed the threshold of the temple there was a great tumult. And all the idols fell before their altars, broken in pieces.

Another time Joseph and Mary and Jesus were passing through a village. They were seeking shelter for the night. It happened that they were received in a new house which belonged to two sisters. The sisters owned a mule which they tended with great demonstrations of affection. They embraced it often, and they made for it a richly embroidered harness. The animal was in reality their own brother. He had been changed into a mule by women who had cast upon him the evil eye.

When Mary heard about it she took her child and put him upon the back of the mule.

"My son," said she, "through thy powerful virtue, heal this mule. Make him become the handsome young man he used to be."

In a twinkling the mule changed its form, and a handsome young man appeared.

Then the two sisters bowed down before Jesus and blessed his name.

And everywhere that Joseph and Mary went with the little child strange things happened and men wondered. Even the wild animals, the wolves, the lions, the leopards, worshiped Jesus and went along with him in the desert.

◆ NAZARETH ◆

In the month of April, in the year of Rome 750, when Herod had died, the Lord sent His angel to Joseph in a dream.

"Arise," said the angel, "take the little child and his mother, and return to the land of Israel. For those who threatened the life of the child are dead."

Joseph arose and told Mary. At dawn they were on their way. The word of the angel had changed their mourning into joy. They were happy to leave a strange land. But soon they heard terrible news: Archelaus, son of Herod, had put to death three thousand Jews in the Temple in Jerusalem. Joseph was afraid for the little child, and he did not know what to do. Once more the angel of the Lord came to him in a dream and told him to go without fear into Galilee. Then Joseph took Mary and Jesus to his house in Nazareth.

Nazareth was not under the authority of Archelaus, for the Emperor Augustus had placed Galilee under the power of another son of Herod, Herod Antipas.

At Nazareth Jesus grew in stature and waxed strong in spirit. He could be seen playing with the other children, and he had great influence over them because he was loving and wise. He always took sides with the little ones and the cripples. He settled quarrels. He reproached those that cheated at games. He reproved those that wanted to fight. Everything that he said gave a good example. And his comrades used to tell surprising things about him. One day, as they were playing upon the terrace of the house, he said to them:

"Who among you could slide down a sunbeam to the street?"

"Not I."

"Nor I."

"Well," said Jesus, "look."

With his little hands he seized a sunbeam and let himself slide down. And he was not hurt.

The children of Nazareth used to love to gather around the fountains in the cool shade of the large plane trees. In the moistened earth they traced diminutive watercourses or dug wee lakes. The carpenter Joseph whittled boats out of bits of wood, and Jesus started them out upon adventures on these little lakes and rivers.

With the dust of the road mixed with water from the fountains the children played at modeling animals. They built houses and forts. Jesus excelled at making little birds out of clay, which is the kind of earth that is used when men make pottery. He made them look so real that one would almost have said they were alive: larks, starlings, parrots, magpies, sparrows, nightingales. Once he tossed several sparrows into the air. They beat their wings and flew away singing.

When Jesus was old enough to learn a trade, as was the custom for all the Jews, Joseph took him, and soon the child handled a hammer, a saw, and a plane with skill.

Nor did they neglect instruction. The Holy Spirit dwelt in him. He understood instantly the lesson they were teaching him. He was the admiration of his teachers, whom he often embarrassed by his questions, for he was more learned than they were, and what he said proved that his knowledge was not of this world.

One day a teacher wished to explain the alphabet to

him. He named the letters, one after the other, and then asked Jesus to say them. Jesus was silent, answering nothing. Annoyed, the teacher lifted his rod. Jesus said:

"Can it be that the one that is struck is teaching the one who strikes?"

Again he said:

"They know nothing who listen and repeat like a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."

And again:

"Tell me first, what is Tau: I will tell you what Alpha means."

The master remaining silent with astonishment, Jesus added:

"Hypocrites are all those who do not know Alpha and pretend to know Tau."

Another day Jesus asked this question:

"What is a letter? What is a word? And what is a phrase?"

"What do you mean?" inquired the teacher; "explain yourself."

Jesus answered:

"The letter—is God; the word born of the letter—is the word of God; and the phrase born of the letter and of the word—is the Holy Spirit."

And the teacher wondered.

Now Joseph went every year to Jerusalem for the Passover. That year he took Mary and Jesus with him. The child was twelve years old, tall for his age but slender. To have him fit to present himself at the Temple, and so that he should do them honor, Mary had put his best clothes on him. He had a garment made of wool, brown and seamless. She had woven it herself for Jesus

to wear on the day of his death, for although it was first made in a child's size, it was to become miraculously of the size for a man.[1]

There were many pilgrims on the road, and Mary and Joseph journeyed in the company of neighbors and friends from Nazareth. Instead of running along with the other children, Jesus, lost in contemplation, stayed close to his parents. He patted and took care of the little donkey which carried their provisions and upon which Mary was seated. And Mary was weary. There were thirty-two leagues between Nazareth and Jerusalem.*

After four days they saw Jerusalem. The Holy Family set up camp on the plain. They were too poor to dream of seeking shelter in an inn. And how could two or three millions of Jews on a pilgrimage find room within the walls of the city?

When the ceremony was over the pilgrims set out on the return journey. People from Galilee formed a long caravan. Those from Nazareth stayed together. The women were showing each other the jewels and materials that they had bought or that their husbands had bought for them. The men conversed about politics. Augustus had deposed the tyrant Archelaus and had made the kingdom of Judah a province of the empire. Agitators had incited the people. But Rome was suppressing the revolts in a brutal manner. All Israel was still shaken with it, grieving secretly over the new troubles that had come upon the people.*

In their affliction the pilgrims were chanting hymns to the glory of the Eternal and of Jerusalem, ancient Zion, the city of the Eternal. And their voices echoed in the mountains:

[1] Tradition.

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.

"Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.

"Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together,

"Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord.

"For there are set thrones of judgment, the throne of the House of David.

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: and those who love thee, Jerusalem, live in peace.

"Peace be within thy walls and tranquillity within thy palaces.

"For my brethren's and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thy breast.

"Because of the house of the Lord our God, I cry to Heaven for thy happiness." [1]

At night the pilgrims stopped and prepared camp. Now Jesus was not to be found with the other children from Nazareth. What had become of him? Nobody had seen him. In tears Mary pleaded with Joseph. He tried to reassure her. She wanted to retrace her footsteps. Nothing her friends said could prevent her.

Mary and Joseph arrived in Jerusalem at daybreak. For two days they went about the city and its environs in vain. There were still many pilgrims in Jerusalem, and this made the search difficult. On the squares, in the markets, in the court of the Gentiles and under the gates of Solomon at the Temple, the confusion was so great that several times Mary was almost separated from Joseph.

[1] Psalms, cxxii.

The third day they made up their minds to set out once again for Nazareth. But they went up to pray once more in the house of the Lord. Until then they had not dared to penetrate to the part where the Jewish doctors were teaching publicly. They made up their minds suddenly. There was a group of venerable men with long beards, clothed in rich robes: Hillel, full of age and respect; Shammai, faultless logician; Rabbi Simeon; Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. There was also Jonathas, son of Uziel. They said of him as a proof of his passionate eloquence that the birds passing over his head burned themselves with his fiery words. Or were changed into seraphim.*

And here, in the midst of these wise and learned men, Mary and Joseph saw Jesus.

The child was asking and answering questions. And the doctors marveled at his knowledge and wisdom. The astonishment of Mary and Joseph was no less. Mary called Jesus. Taking him aside she reproached him gently:

"My son, why hast thou done this? For three days we have been looking for thee; thy father and I were profoundly troubled."

"Why didst thou seek me?" he answered. "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

He meant that it was his duty to be entirely at the service of God. But Joseph and Mary did not understand.

After the return to Nazareth with Mary and Joseph, Jesus led a humble and industrious life. When he was not at work making yokes for oxen, beams for houses, or the wooden parts of plows, he withdrew into the open country. For he loved to be alone. In the shade of a plane

tree or under the olive trees, he read holy books, he meditated, he allowed his thoughts to go toward God.*

Yielding to convention, he did not lend himself to idle talk. His gentleness and great wisdom won for him the esteem and respect of all.

Humility caused him to hide his superiority as a human being and his divine soul. His hour had not yet come.[1]

◈ THE DEATH OF JOSEPH ◈

Now Joseph was growing old. Although he was far advanced in years, he enjoyed the use of all the faculties of his body. His sight had not diminished, and in his mouth were teeth that were without blemish. However, as it must be with every man, the fatal moment came. An angel warned him. He then went to Jerusalem in order to kneel in prayer in the house of the Lord. And he prayed:

"O God, Father of all pity, God of all flesh, God of my soul, of my body and mind and spirit, since the days that thou hast accorded to me in this world are accomplished, I pray thee, Lord God, to send unto me the archangel Michael that he might stay beside me until my poor soul has left my body without pain and without fear. For to all men death is a great sorrow and a great perplexity; it is a great sorrow and a great perplexity to every creature with a living soul. O my Lord, let thine angel rest near unto my soul and my body until they are separated, one from the other, without worry and without pain. Let the angel that has been my judge since the day when I was made not turn away from me his

[1] According to P. Peeters, "Histoire de Joseph le Charpentier" (apocryphal), pp. 56-60.

glorious face, but let him go along with me until I shall arrive near thee. Let him help and pity me. Let my soul escape the torments of the wicked angels. Let not those that watch at the gate stop me on my way. Before thy terrible tribunal, let me not be confounded. Let not wild beasts come near me. Let not my soul be submerged by the waves in the river of fire which every soul must cross before contemplating the glory of thy divinity, O God of truth and justice. O my Lord, thy pity shall comfort me, for thou art the fountain of all good. And thine shall be the glory from eternity to eternity. Amen."

When he had thus prayed, Joseph went home to Nazareth. There he began to feel the malady of which he was to die.

The day when he departed from his body was the twenty-sixth of August. The fine gold that had been his flesh began to change, and the silver that had been his reason and his wisdom altered.

It happened upon that day, when the light began to appear, that he was restless upon his couch. He opened his mouth and groaned. He beat his hands one against the other. And in a loud voice, in supreme contrition, he accused himself of all his sins:

"Woe is the day when my mother brought me into the world; woe is the womb that carried me; woe is the breast that nourished me! Woe upon the knees that cradled me! Woe upon the hands that supported me until I was grown! For I have sinned! Woe upon my tongue and upon my lips: they have spoken curses, detraction, lies, imposture, and vain words, careless or hypocritical! Woe upon my ears; they have enjoyed hearing evil speakers! Woe upon my eyes; they have looked upon scandal!

Woe upon my hands; they have taken what did not belong to them! Woe upon my belly and my bowels; they have longed for that which is forbidden! Woe upon my throat, for it has devoured like fire! Woe upon my feet; they have often walked in paths not pleasing to God! Woe upon my body; it has impoverished my soul and turned me away from the God that made me! What shall I do now? I am attacked on all sides. Woe upon every man dying in sin! Verily this hour is terrible, the hour that came upon my father Jacob, when his soul was departing from his body; and here it is upon me, a wretched man. But God alone rules my soul and my body. It is his will that shall be done."

The sweat of death was upon his face. He suffered pains like unto those of childbirth. Agony shook him like a violent tempest or a devouring fire.

At this moment Jesus approached him, saying:

"Hail, my father Joseph; thou art a just man!"

When he heard these words, straightway the spirit of the good old man was at peace. Mary asked her son:

"Is it true that Joseph must die?"

Jesus answered:

"O beloved mother, all creatures born in this world must die. Death is the ruler of humanity. Thou thyself must taste death like all the others. But thy death and that of the good old man Joseph will not be death, for thou art assured of life eternal. O my mother, I too must die of the body which I have from thee."

Now Jesus, seeing that Joseph was motionless, placed his hand upon the heart, and he knew that the soul was already in the throat.

And in the same moment Joseph perceived death. It was coming from the south, followed by hell and in-

numerable multitudes clothed in fire and spitting smoke and sulphur. And his eyes were wet with tears.

But Jesus, standing at the foot of the death-bed, was praying in his heart:

"O Lord of all pity, eye that sees all, ear that hears all, hear my cry and my petition. Send Michael, chiefest among the angels, and Gabriel, the messenger of light, and all the celestial armies with their choirs, to go with the soul of my father Joseph unto thee. Pity him in his hour of need."

The soul of Joseph, with a great sigh, departed from his body. It was received by Michael and Gabriel, who wrapped it in a luminous shroud. The angels drove away the demons of darkness, and praising God they led the soul of Joseph into the dwelling place of the just.

When the body of Joseph had been put into the tomb, Jesus withdrew into the country, as was his way. He needed to meditate. He could not keep his thoughts from dwelling upon death. And he said:

"O Death, who bringest all human works to nothing and causest tears and piercing cries, it is God my Father who hath given thee thy power. Because they disobeyed, Adam and Eve died. Alas, no one escapes. But death can do nothing without the will of my Father. Men have lived in this world nine hundred years, and they died. Several have lived longer, and they died. None can say, I have not tasted death. Death torments a man but once. And it is my Father who sends it. It comes as the sentence of Heaven. If the sentence is rendered in trouble and anger, death likewise comes in trouble and with anger to fulfil the will of my Father. The attack is swift, and brutally it carries the soul away. But death hath no

power to choose whether to take a soul to fire or to the Kingdom of Heaven. Death is an order from God. Because Adam did not do the will of my Father, because he violated his command, my Father was angry with him and condemned him to death. And so death came into the world. If Adam had kept the commandments of my Father, death would never have been known. Because of the disobedience of Adam, this great sorrow and this greater agony of death came upon all humanity. That is why I must die in the flesh, so that man may obtain pity."

And after he had said this, Jesus wept over his father Joseph, who had been good to him and to the Virgin Mary.

Henceforth Jesus divided his affection between Mary his mother and Mary the sister of his mother, who had married a brother of Joseph, called Alpheus or Cleophas. He had died shortly after Joseph. This Mary had daughters and sons, and they called her Mary the mother of James, to distinguish her from Mary the mother of Jesus.

They were all like one family. They had a way of speaking of James, Joseph, Simon, and Jude (there were four boys and three girls from the union of Mary and Cleophas), saying that they were the brothers and sisters of Jesus. Later these brothers were among the first to doubt Jesus. They had grown up with him and worked with him, and they could not believe that he was the one proclaimed by the prophets.

And yet a voice was crying in the wilderness: "Lo, he is come. Prepare ye the way of the Lord."

At that time (the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar), Pontius Pilate, the Roman procurator,

ruled over Idumea, Samaria, and Judea. Herod Antipas was tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. Philip his brother was tetrarch of Iturea, Trachonitis, Gaulanitis, Auranitis, Basanitis. Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene. And Annas and Caiaphas were pontiffs in Jerusalem.

Now, more than seven centuries earlier, in the days of Joatham, Achaz, and Ezekias, kings of Judah, the word of the Eternal was spoken to Isaiah son of Amos.

And Isaiah the prophet said to Israel in the name of the Eternal:

"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

"Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight; the mountains shall become level, and the rough places plain.

"And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh at that time shall see the salvation of God." [1]

The word of the Eternal was spoken to Malachi. And Malachi the prophet said unto Israel in the name of the Eternal:

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts." [2]

[1] Isaiah, xl.
[2] Malachi, iii.

II

THE MINISTRY—I

◈ THE WORD OF JOHN ◈

Like Jesus of Nazareth, John, the son of Zacharias and Elisabeth, was brought up in wisdom. His early years were spent in obscurity at Youttah, near Hebron.

As he grew, the purity of his soul was shown. And he manifested early a profound mystic piety.

Zacharias, who was a priest, presented him at the Temple. He wished to initiate his son in the practices of the priests, but John knew that the Lord had set him aside for a higher calling. He left Jerusalem to withdraw into Judea, a rocky and desolate country which men used to compare to a desert.*

He was clothed in camel's skin, and a leathern girdle was about his loins. He used to live on wild honey and locusts. And he drank only water. For the angel of the Lord, foretelling his birth to Zacharias, had said that he would take neither wine nor strong drink. As he was set apart for the work of the Lord, no blade touched his hair or beard.

His life was solitary, and he meditated continually upon himself and upon the word of the prophets that had spoken of his coming.

And now he went down into the valley of Jericho where flows the Jordan.

All who saw him believed that Elias, who went up to Heaven in a chariot of fire, had come back to earth, according to the prophecy of Malachi.

This was happening during the autumn of the year 779, according to Rome.

In the evening when the fiery light of the sun was dying on the horizon, a mysterious voice went up from the desert. It sounded in the night like the desperate pleading of one who was passing on. Women and children trembled. Men as they went toward the voice heard these words:

"Repent, for the time is at hand!"

And rumor ran through the villages and even unto Jerusalem that the Eternal was inspiring a new prophet. People came to him from everywhere. Crowds of Jews, rich and poor, dressed in many colors, were seen hastening to the banks of the Jordan. And John baptized those who confessed their sins. He was gentle with the unfortunate and violent with the others: doctors of the law, Pharisees, Sadducees, heretics, false prophets, and sectarians. He said unto them:

"O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance, and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

"And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth forth not good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire."

And the people asked him saying:

"What shall we do then?"

He answered and said unto them:

"He that hath two coats, let him share with him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise."

Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him:

"Master, what shall we do?"

And he said unto them:

"Exact no more than that which is appointed you."

For he knew that often there was a stone in the breast of him who collected taxes.

And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying:

"And what shall we do?"

And he said unto them:

"Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages."

They were full of admiration, and all men mused in their hearts.

◈ THE BAPTISM OF JESUS ◈

As they were waiting for the coming of the Messiah, the people wondered whether John the Baptist were the Christ.

And it came to the attention of the members of the Sanhedrim. They were stirred by the question, and they decided to send priests and doctors to the Forerunner. These men went in state to Bethany, across from Jericho. They met John at the Jordan where he was baptizing.

"Who art thou?" they said.

John confessed:

"I am not the Christ."

"Art thou Elias?"

John answered:

"I am not."

"Art thou that prophet?"

John answered:

"No."

"Tell us who thou art, that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?"

John said:

"I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord!"

"Why baptizest thou then if thou be not the Christ nor Elias, neither that prophet?"

And John answered:

"As for me, I baptize with water; I sprinkle water upon the impurities of the body and the blemishes of the soul. But there will come after me a greater one, whose shoe latchet I am not worthy to unloose. He will baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

"Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

With these words and many more of the same kind, John exhorted the people, announcing to them the Good News. And the Jews knew that he was foretelling the arrival of him who should separate the good from the bad, opening to the one the Kingdom of Heaven, thrusting the others into the fires of hell.

Now Jesus, mingling with the people of Nazareth, came to John. It was during the first days of the Roman year 780, and Jesus was about thirty years old.

John and Jesus, although they were kinsmen, had never seen each other. But John recognized Jesus straightway in the crowd.

"I have need to be baptized of thee, and thou comest to me!" he said.

"Suffer it to be so now," Jesus answering said unto him, "for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

When he had taken off his garments he went into the water. John baptized him. And, lo, the Heavens were opened and the Spirit of God, in the form of a dove, descended upon Jesus.

And John heard a voice from Heaven saying:

"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

John cried:

"This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.

"Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.

"And I knew him not; but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore I am come baptizing with water. And I knew him not, but that he sent me to baptize with water. The same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

"And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God."

◆ THE TEMPTATION ◆

After being baptized by John, Jesus was led of the spirit into the wilderness. He needed to be alone. As a man, he wished to make himself through penitence worthy to serve the Lord. As the Son of God, he wished, like Moses upon Mount Nebo, to commune with his Father.

But the Eternal had willed that he be put to the test. He sent Satan to tempt him.

For forty days and forty nights the devil tried to deceive him. For forty days and forty nights Jesus with-

stood temptation. And as he had remained among the wild beasts of the wilderness, fasting for forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

Then Satan said to him:

"If thou be the Son of God, command these stones to change themselves into bread."

"It is written," Jesus replied, "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word of God."

While Jesus was sleeping, the devil set him upon a pinnacle of the Temple in Jerusalem, and said unto him:

"If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written that God will command his angels, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone."

The tempter was recalling the verses of the Psalm which promised the protection of the Most High to one who takes refuge in him:

"There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy brethren.

"For God shall give his angels charge to keep thee in all thy ways.

"They shall bear thee up in their hands lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." [1]

Jesus said:

"It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

Again Satan taketh him up into a high mountain, the mountain that Moses climbed, to die. He showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.

"I will give thee power over these kingdoms and the glory of them," said he, "for power and glory are mine.

[1] Psalms, xci.

I give them to whom I will. All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down at my feet."

Jesus cried:

"Get thee hence, Satan! For it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

He had nothing to do with power and glory; his kingdom was not of this world.

And when the devil had ended the temptation, he departed from him for a season. Then the beasts of the wilderness, lions, leopards, hyenas, jackals, ceased their roaring and came close around Jesus. And angels from Heaven served him.

◈ THE MARRIAGE IN CANA ◈

Jesus came down from the wilderness. He was walking alongside the Jordan. Seeing him, John cried:

"Behold the Lamb of God!"

And straightway two of his disciples followed Jesus. They were Andrew and John, of the village of Bethsaida, which is near the lake of Gennesaret. Jesus said unto them:

"Whom seek ye?"

"Master, where dwellest thou?"

"Come and see."

Jesus took them to a dwelling made of dried palms, and Andrew and John had communion of spirit with him until the night fell.

The next day Andrew met Simon, his brother. Simon was seeking John the Baptist.

"We have found the anointed of the Lord, the Messiah, the Christ," said Andrew.

And Jesus addressing the new-comer said:

"Thou art Simon the son of Jonas: thou shalt be called Cephas."

To Simon this meant, "Thou art weak, and thou shalt be strong; son of a timid dove, thou shalt be like a stone."

The following day, Jesus, returning into Galilee, met a young man called Philip, of the village of Bethsaida, like Andrew and his brother Simon, that is Cephas, that is Peter.

Jesus said to Philip:

"Follow me."

And Philip obeyed him.

Now Philip came to meet Nathanael.

"We have found," he said, "him whom Moses and the prophets announced."

"Who is he?"

"The son of Joseph, Jesus of Nazareth."

"Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

The saying was among the Jews that no good could come from Nazareth.

Philip answered:

"Come and see."

Now Jesus said, pointing to Nathanael:

"Behold an Israelite in whom there is no guile."

"Whence knowest thou me?" asked the young man, astonished.

Alluding to a fact which Nathanael believed was known only to himself, Jesus replied:

"I saw thee under the fig tree, before Philip called thee."

Then, marveling, Nathanael bowed his head, saying:

"Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel."

"Because I said unto thee that I saw thee under the fig tree, thou believest in me," said Jesus. "Thou shalt see greater things than these."

And turning toward his first disciples, he added:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye shall see Heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

Three days later Jesus had returned to Nazareth, and he had with him Andrew, John, Simon Peter, Philip, and Nathanael.

Now there was a marriage, at Cana, a little neighboring village. Mary had been invited there.

They had invited Jesus too, as well as his disciples.

According to the custom, and although the bride and groom were of humble origin, like Jesus himself, a great feast was spread. Toward the end, Mary, who was helping the women serve the men, noticed there was no more wine in the jar. She made a sign to her son. But Jesus said to her:

"Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come."

By these surprising words, he wished his mother to understand (as he had already told her, the day when she came with Joseph to search for him among the doctors at Jerusalem) that he no longer belonged to her, as he was henceforth under the orders of his Heavenly Father. But Mary took his answer in the right way, for she said to the servants:

"Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."

Now there were six earthen jars for the purification, for the law required the Jews to wash their hands and their feet before taking places at table.

Jesus said to the servants:

"Fill the water pots with water."

They filled them to the brim. And at the command of Jesus they bore them to the governor of the feast. And, behold, the governor tasted the water and manifested great surprise.

"Generally," said he to the bridegroom, "they serve the good wine at the beginning of the feast. When the guests have drunk well, they serve that which is worse. But thou hast kept the best for the end."

And the bridegroom did not know how to answer, for great was his surprise. Greater still was the surprise of the servants who had poured water into the earthen jars. Only Jesus seemed indifferent to the matter. But his disciples knew that he had changed water into wine.

Thus happened the first of the miracles of Jesus. He did it in Cana of Galilee. And thus he manifested his glory, and his disciples believed on him.

◈ THE MERCHANTS IN THE TEMPLE ◈

As the Passover was at hand, Jesus resolved to go up to Jerusalem. With his mother, his brethren, and his disciples he went down to Capernaum, on the shore of the lake of Gennesaret, in order to join the other pilgrims from Galilee.

Immediately after arriving in Jerusalem, Jesus went up to the Temple. The house of the Eternal presented a sad spectacle.

The money changers sitting on the tile floor were carrying on their trade, alongside a vender who was crying melons and cool drinks. The noise of political dis-

putes mingled with children's games, with the pedantries of the doctors, with the lowing of cattle, with the bleating of sheep, with the cooing of the doves which the Israelites bought for the sacrifice.

This confusion, this market, this fair, shocked Jesus. Is it to this pass that the people of the Temple have brought the dwelling place of the Eternal? In his indignation he made a scourge of small cords that were lying about on the ground. And with his arm raised he threatened, ordered the merchants to leave the holy place, to go out of the Temple. The majesty of his manner, the authority of his word, the fire in his eyes, subdued the Jews, who crowded toward the doors, dragging their sheep and their cattle along with them. Those who resisted he chastised with his scourge. He overthrew the tables of the money changers and poured out their gold, silver, and brass.

There was gentleness only for the modest sellers of pigeons or doves because of those they served, who were the poor.

"Take these things hence," he said unto them, pointing to the cages filled with birds; "make not my Father's house an house of merchandise."

Witnesses of the indignation of their master, the disciples were astounded. But one of them remembered the words of David:

"The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me." [1]

Jesus was suffering in his heart from the reproach to the Eternal made by those who were trading in his dwelling.

[1] Psalms, lxix.

And the Jews crowded round him and pressed him with questions.

"Who art thou, to drive us from the Temple?" demanded one.

Only a prophet could act in this way.

"Show us the sign of thy power," said another.

Jesus answered simply:

"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

Destroy this holy place through your practices, bring low the worship of the Eternal, and I will raise it up in three days. That was what Jesus said. He was speaking of the temple of his body and of his resurrection. But the Jews did not understand the meaning of his words. How could they understand? Jesus alone knew his own destiny. When he should rise from the dead, his disciples would remember his answer to the Jews of the Temple, and they would believe on him.

Now the Jews, persuaded that the Rabbi meant the construction of the house of God, cried:

"Forty and six years was this Temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?"

And, doubting and mocking, they were murmuring against the Master and his disciples. Some nevertheless believed on him, the following days, for he did things that amazed them greatly. But Jesus suspected them. He knew them all. Without investigating them individually he knew what there was in each man.

There was in Jerusalem a man called Nicodemus. He was advanced in years, and men called him just and wise. He had studied with the rabbis and had obtained the diploma of a doctor. This got him into the Sanhedrim or

council of the nation. This important man, educated and intelligent as he was, had an inquiring mind. The preaching of John interested him, and he was troubled with his soul. But as he was hesitating and weak he was afraid of compromising himself if he were to stoop before the one crying in the wilderness.

The marvelous things that he saw done by Jesus decided him to break prudent reserve. He wished to question the Rabbi, for he needed to see in order to believe. But he did not dare to seek him unless it were under the cover of night. Jesus received him kindly.

"Rabbi," said Nicodemus, bowing, "I salute in thee the messenger of God, for no man could accomplish the wonders that thou doest if God were not with him."

Nicodemus revered the man of God. God in the man—he saw not at all. Willing and ready though he was, faith was lacking.

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee," said Jesus, "except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

"How can a man be born again when he is old?" demanded Nicodemus. "Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

Always the same confusion! Jesus was speaking of Heaven. Nicodemus was thinking of the earth. Jesus said we must forget what we have learned, purify ourselves in heart and in soul, be born again to God through the spirit. Nicodemus understood that one must become again a little suckling child.

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee," Jesus insisted, "except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."

He was evoking the double baptism of the body and of the soul.

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I say unto thee that ye must be born again."

To make Nicodemus understand that grace is only for him who is pleasing to God, and as he was pleasing to God, Jesus added:

"The wind bloweth where it listeth. Thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the spirit."

"How can these things be?"

Jesus was surprised.

"Art thou a master of Israel and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, I speak of what I know, I testify that I have seen, and thou doubtest my testimony. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of Heavenly things?

"And no man hath ascended up to Heaven, but he that came from Heaven, even the Son of man which is in Heaven."

Jesus was affirming his divinity. He was to reveal the meaning of his mission, anticipating events, for the things that he expected were no secret to him.

And as Moses in the desert lifted up the serpent, at the command of the Eternal, so that whoever were stung by the serpent should find healing at the sight of this image, even so, he said, must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only

begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

"For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, lest his deeds should be discovered.

"But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."

Did Nicodemus, doctor in Israel, understand these parables? Yes, there is no doubt of that. Although he was deeply moved, he hesitated to declare himself. He left Jesus without confessing his faith. Grace was to touch him only at the foot of the cross. Seeing the Son of man lifted upon the cross, he would remember his words and would believe.

After the Passover Jesus went into Judea with his disciples. These were baptizing, and he made his voice heard by all that were coming to him.

At that time John was in Ænon near to Salim. There was much water at Ænon, and this made it possible to immerse the Jews that came to receive baptism.

Those who were going to John were more numerous than those going to Jesus. Now the disciples of John

had a dispute with the Jews about this question. And still warm with anger they went to find their master:

"Rabbi," they said unto him, "he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and the Jews come to him."

John pacified them:

"A man can receive nothing except it come to him from Heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.

"He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom who is present rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. And that is my joy which is perfect. He must increase, but I must decrease.

"He that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth; he hath earth in his mouth. He that cometh from above is above all, and he testifieth what he hath seen and heard. Men dare to doubt his testimony. He that hath received his testimony is assured that God is true.

"For he whom God hath sent speaketh in the name of God; he hath the word of God in his mouth, for God giveth not the spirit by measure unto him.

"The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into his hand.

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. And he that believeth not the Son shall not enter eternity, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

◈ JOHN IN PRISON ◈

Alas! The ministry of John would soon be at an end.

Until then John had remained in the land of Judea. When Jesus and his disciples established themselves in

the region of the Dead Sea and were baptizing there, he went up the valley of the Jordan to the springs of Ænon in Samaria. He was nearing the kingdom of Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. He had only to cross the Jordan to set foot upon Perea.

What John was saying was noised about and came to the ears of Herod Antipas. He would not have been disquieted by the presence of the Baptist in his territory if the prophet (who had inherited the violence of Elias) had not thundered against him.

Herod Antipas was a weak prince, not at all inhuman, but corrupt. Husband of an Arabian princess, daughter of his neighbor Aretas, king of Petra, he repudiated her to live with Herodias, wife of his brother Philip and granddaughter of Herod the Great, his father.

Ambitious, passionate, Herodias suffered from the low estate in which Philip held her, Philip who had never received anything in the way of paternal inheritance. Very beautiful as she was, she had no difficulty in seducing Antipas.

By her husband, she had had a daughter, Salome. According to the law her union with her brother-in-law was criminal. Herod Antipas and Herodias were not only adulterers; they were incestuous.

For the Jews it was a great scandal. Those who came to John begged him to intervene before the tetrarch. His authority was great, and in talking to Antipas he could express the indignation of the people. He never went near the palace of Herod, but he denounced his conduct publicly, with his habitual violence, for his words burned like a torch.

His speeches were reported to Herodias. Vindictive and audacious, she told the tetrarch it was not tolerable that

a man who was nothing at all, like John, should dare to judge and condemn others. It was nothing less than an insult to her, and the people were being taught to scorn their prince. Driven too far, and finally at bay, Antipas at last ordered the arrest of the prophet. The doctors and the scribes had their share in urging him on to this decision. The increasing influence of John was worrying them. Did he not set himself up against the Pharisees, the rich priests, all the grafters of the law? Later, for the same reasons, they lined themselves up against Jesus and his teaching because what he said menaced their privileges and their official position.

Taking advantage of the fact that he was preaching in Perea, the accomplices of Antipas set upon the Forerunner and dragged him before their master. The brutality of the auxiliaries of the tetrarch and the look of the man himself did not deter them.

"It is forbidden to thee to take the wife of thy brother," said he to Antipas.

Herodias wished him put to death, but Herod was afraid of the anger of the people. John moreover inspired fear in him. He contented himself with having John thrown into a cell of a fortress erected on top of a wild mountain, where thick high walls protected a luxurious palace dominating the Dead Sea.

Around this strong place there grew strange plants, tall as trees. At night their amazing roots took on the color of fire. A man hardy enough to seize their branches was struck dead. And from the depth of gorges of infernal depth, or from the crest of the mountains, water steaming or icy cold flowed with a terrifying roar.

John was to live there for twelve months. Realizing,

however, that the prophet was a holy and just man, Herod Antipas allowed him to see his disciples and went to see him himself. And they say that he listened to John with pleasure and many a time took his advice.

◆ THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA ◆

When the news that John was in prison came, Jesus and his disciples, led of the Spirit, left Judea and went into Galilee. When crossing the province of Samaria, they chanced to pass near the little town of Sychar, of the land that Jacob gave to Joseph, his son. It was about the sixth hour; the midday sun was burning hot. Jesus, being weary, stopped. There were a few trees and a well which Jacob had dug himself. The Rabbi sat on the edge of the well, leaving to his disciples the errand of buying food in the town. Perhaps he did not wish to mingle with the Samaritans, schismatics who hated the Jews since the Jews refused to allow them to participate in the reconstruction of the Temple of Jerusalem. . . .

Now, while Jesus was resting, a woman of Samaria came out from Sychar with a water jar on her shoulder. She was slender as a palm, and her skin was like amber, for the sun had caressed it. She was walking along, taking little steps, and the gold and silver bracelets on her ankles were jingling. She saw Jesus. But she was not frightened.

For she was of those women who do not veil themselves in the presence of men.

When she had drawn water from the well Jesus said unto her:

"Woman, give me to drink."

"How is it," said she ironically, "that thou, being a

Jew, askest drink of me, a woman of Samaria? The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans!"

Jesus answered:

"If thou knewest the gift of God and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."

Not understanding of what divine gift Jesus was speaking, the woman did not take him seriously.

"Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?"

"Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again," said Jesus, "but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst. For the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

"Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw," said the woman, still thinking that Jesus was speaking of water when he really was telling of love.

And Jesus, almost in despair because she did not understand, said to her:

"Go, call thy husband, and come hither."

"I have no husband."

"Thou hast well said, I have no husband," said Jesus. "For thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband. In that saidst thou truly."

"Sir," said the woman, humiliated, "I perceive that thou art a prophet." Then pointing to the place where formerly Shechem stood (the rival city of Zion), she added, revealing anxiety of mind and soul:

"Our fathers worshiped in this mountain; and ye say

that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."

Then Jesus, seeing her confusion:

"Woman, believe me. The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth—not by bloody sacrifice—for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

"God is a spirit. They that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

Like all of her race, the woman of Samaria was waiting for the Messiah. She said then to Jesus:

"I know that the Messiah cometh which is called Christ; when he is come, he will tell us all things."

Then Jesus said unto her:

"I that speak unto thee am he."

At this moment the disciples came back from Sychar. They marveled to see the master talking with the woman. But none asked him, "What art thou demanding of her," or, "Of what art thou speaking to this woman."

Leaving her water pot on the edge of the well, the woman of Samaria hastened to the town. To all that she met she cried:

"Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did!" And she added:

"Is not this the Christ?"

And men, women, and children went out from Sychar to see Jesus.

In the meanwhile, his disciples urged him to take some of the food they had brought:

"Master, eat."

But Jesus said gently:

"I have meat to eat that ye know not of."

"Hath any man brought him to eat, during our absence?" the disciples said, one to another. Like the woman of Samaria, they were thinking of earthly food, while Jesus was speaking of spiritual nourishment.

"My meat," he said unto them, "is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work."

And he spoke further unto them, referring to one of those parables that had made a vivid impression on those who were listening, because of familiar images:

"Do ye not say, There are yet four months and then cometh the harvest? I say unto you, Lift up your eyes and look on the fields; for they are white already to the harvest."

The disciples were thinking of harvests that men put into barns. Jesus was speaking of the reaper of souls. For the Samaritans were coming from everywhere to hear his words: artisans, peasants, shepherds, merchants. . . .

And Jesus said:

"And he that reapeth receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto life eternal. And he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor; other men sowed, and ye shall take in the harvest."

Now the Samaritans besought him to enter their city. He accepted and tarried with them two days.

Through the testimony of the woman of Samaria, several believed on him. But many others said unto the woman:

"Thy testimony is not the cause of our faith. For we have heard him ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world."

◈ JESUS DRIVEN OUT OF NAZARETH ◈ ◈ CAPERNAUM. ◈

Leaving Sychar, Jesus went away in the direction of Nazareth. His disciples were walking near him, and many Samaritans accompanied him.

In Galilee men hastened to the place where he was. His reputation had gone before him, for many Galileans who had gone up to Jerusalem at the time of the Passover had told, upon their return, of his words and deeds.

On the Sabbath he went into the synagogue. When the Psalms were sung, the prayers recited, after the words of Moses had been heard, he rose and went to the platform of the reader. Then taking the book of the prophet from the hands of the minister he commented upon the verse that had been designated to him.

At Nazareth one day they gave him the book of Isaiah. When the scroll was unrolled he read:

"The spirit of the Lord is upon me: he hath anointed me; he hath sent me to preach good tidings unto the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to deliver the captives, to open the eyes of the blind, to give liberty to the oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of his justice."

Giving back the scroll to the minister, he sat down. The eyes of all the Jews were fastened on him. He meditated, then said quietly:

"To-day that which you have just heard is accomplished."

A profound emotion stirred the assembly. And they bowed before the Rabbi who spoke like a new prophet.

Whence cometh this knowledge? What is this wisdom, and who gave it unto him? And how are such great miracles done by his hands?

The skeptics, however, were astonished.

"Is not this the son of the carpenter Joseph and of Mary, the brother of James, Joseph, Jude, and Simon? Are not his sisters among us?"

It seemed to them surprising that the son of the carpenter should have the authority to comfort the disinherited and to speak in the name of the Eternal. The divine character of the Rabbi escaped them.

Jesus, who could read their hearts, turned toward them:

"Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself, and whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country. Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country."

And he mocked the doubters in these terms:

"Verily, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when Heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land. But unto none of them was Elias sent, but he went to a widow of Sarepta, a city of Sidon.

"And many lepers were in Israel, in the time of Eliseus, the prophet: and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman of Syria."

This was his manner of telling them that foreigners and pagans were more worthy than they to receive the words of the Eternal.

And the Jews were filled with wrath.

They rose in disorder, surrounded him, thrust him out,

and led him to the brow of the hill whereon their city was built.

They would have cast him down headlong if they had not been suddenly stricken as with the palsy.

Then Jesus passed through the midst of them, and no man could prevent him.

As he was leaving Nazareth, Jesus was thinking of his childhood, of his youth. In imagination he saw himself once again playing with the other children around the fountain, working with his hands in the shop of his father Joseph, meditating in the country round about, and his soul was filled with sadness.

Near him his disciples were walking, silent. They also were sad.

The little group came to Cana, where the Master made the water wine. Jesus had friends in this village, and Mary his mother perhaps lived there. He stopped there with his companions.

Now, although Cana was a six hours' journey from Capernaum, an officer of Herod's, who lived in this town, heard of the presence of the Master in Galilee. His son was ill, and the doctors could do nothing to prevent him from dying. So he went toward Cana to beseech Jesus to come and heal his child:

"Lord, come to my son, before it is too late."

Jesus, still feeling the sting of the outrages committed by doubting men of Nazareth, answered him:

"Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe."

Touched, however, by the distress of the father, trembling for the life of his child, he added:

"Go thy way; thy son liveth."

And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken.

As he was returning to Capernaum, several of his servants ran to him. From farther away than they could really see him, they shouted:

"Thy son is saved!"

"At what hour did he begin to mend?"

"Yesterday, at the seventh hour, the fever left him."

The father recognized it was at that hour Jesus had said, "Thy son liveth."

And he believed, he and all his house.

And that was the second miracle of Jesus in Cana.

Now the son of Amos, Isaiah the prophet, had said unto Israel, in the name of the Eternal:

"The Eternal hath afflicted the land of Zebulon and Naphtali; but in the future he will cover the land near the sea with glory, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles." [1]

And again:

"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." [2]

Thus, more than seven centuries beforehand, the prophet designated the land where Jesus was to speak and to shed his blood.

After he left Cana, Jesus established himself in Capernaum. He loved the city across which caravans toiled on the way to Damascus.

On these highways he was always to be heard preaching at all the cross-roads.

"The time is accomplished," he used to say, harking back to the words of the prophets who announced the

[1] Isaiah, viii.

[2] Isaiah, ix.

coming of the Christ. "Repent ye, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

Men listened to him and followed him, for his word was powerful.

He touched the heart of women and the plain people with his simplicity and the tenderness of a brotherly heart.

And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two of his disciples, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, sitting in a boat. They were casting their net into the sea, for they were fishermen by trade. And he saith unto them:

"Follow me! I will make you fishers of men."

And without hesitation Simon and Andrew followed him.

And going on from thence they saw James and John, sitting in a ship with Zebedee, their father, mending their nets, for they were fishermen also. Jesus called them by name. And immediately James and John left their work and their father to follow him.

And Jesus went about all Galilee with them, teaching in their synagogues, healing the sick and the infirm among the people, proclaiming the kingdom of God; that is, the reign of goodness, justice, love, faith, in the place of the reign of violence, gold, luxury, pride, injustice.

His fame went throughout all Syria. And they brought unto him all those who were suffering: those which were possessed with devils, lunatics, and those that had the palsy. He delivered them and restored their health.

One day he was speaking in the synagogue in Capernaum. The multitude was listening with admiration, for

he taught according to his own doctrine, while the scribes only made comments or repeated the word of the prophets. Now there was present a man possessed of a devil, who cried out:

"What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee, who thou art: the Holy One of God!"

Jesus, recognizing Satan, said unto him:

"Hold thy peace, and come out of him!"

The devil cried aloud and came out of the man, who had been thrown to the ground, shaken with convulsions. And when this man arose, he was cleansed of the devil.

The Jews, amazed, spake among themselves, saying:

"What is this? What is this new doctrine? With authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they obey him."

And they all wondered.

And he arose out of the synagogue and with James and John entered into the house of Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother. And Simon's wife's mother was in her bed, taken with a great fever. The two brothers made her excuses to their master. But Jesus asked them to take him to her. Approaching the bed, he rebuked the fever, and it left her. Then he took the woman by the hand and helped her to her feet. And immediately she ministered unto the Rabbi and his disciples.

With the Jews, the Sabbath day was entirely consecrated to rest and prayer. The people of Capernaum, disturbed by what Jesus had said and done in the synagogue, did not dare to break the rule; but when the sun was setting they brought the sick and those possessed of devils,

and came to find Jesus. Soon all the people of the city were before the door of the mother-in-law of Simon Peter.

Moved by their faith, Jesus went to the kneeling crowd, healing all upon whom he laid his hands, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows."

And devils, coming out of the bodies of those possessed, cried out:

"Thou art Christ, the Son of God!"

But Jesus, rebuking them, suffered them not to speak, for he did not want their testimony. He forbade them to say that he was the Christ.

At dawn on the morrow he arose and went out. And he departed into a desert place to pray. Now Simon Peter and his brothers came to find him.

"They are all seeking thee," they said unto him.

But Jesus answered:

"Let us go to neighboring cities, so that I may preach there also, for that is why I am sent."

As he was departing a multitude of people surrounded him to stay him. But Jesus told once again of his mission:

"I must go into the other cities to proclaim the Kingdom of God; therefore am I sent."

And he went away, followed by his disciples.

◆ THE MIRACULOUS TAKING OF FISHES ◆
◆ THE LEPER AND THE PARALYTIC ◆

As soon as Jesus and his friends arrived in a village, all the population hastened to see him. The plain folk were always the first to come.

While he was stern toward those who were rich, Jesus

was full of compassion and brotherly kindness toward those who had no worldly goods. The former murmured against him; the latter were heartened because he told them of paradise to come. He loved talking with them and striking home to their understanding his pictured parables. In the shadow of a plane tree or an olive tree he gathered them close about him, or again he mingled with the fishermen on the shore of the lake of Gennesaret. Often he sat in the boat of Simon Peter, and from there he spoke to the hearts of the people crowded on the sands to listen to the word of God. One day he said unto Simon:

"Launch out into the deep and let down the nets for a draft."

"Master," said Simon unto him, "we have toiled all the night and have taken nothing; nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net."

Simon and his companions let down the net, and they inclosed so great a multitude of fishes that the net broke. And they beckoned unto their partners which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. Soon the two ships were full enough to sink.

"Lord!" cried Simon Peter, falling down at the feet of Jesus, "depart from me, for I am a sinful man."

And the other fishermen—James and John, sons of Zebedee—were with them, and they also fell upon their knees, stricken suddenly with fear.

Jesus reassured them. And he said unto Simon:

"Fear not! From henceforth thou shalt catch men."

Simon had already heard these words. Although their real meaning escaped him, fear departed from him. He helped his companions to bring the ships in upon the

sand; then with the sons of Zebedee he followed Jesus upon the way.

And it came to pass when the Master was going through the city that a man full of leprosy fell upon his face upon the ground, saying:

"Lord! If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."

With compassion, Jesus put forth his hand and touched the man, saying:

"I will; be thou clean."

The sores dried immediately, and the leper was cleaned.

Now, lepers were treated as outcasts. People kept away from them in horror. Any one that had approached a leper became an object of fear and disgust. And Jesus forbade him whom he had made clean to speak of it to any one before satisfying the prescriptions of the law:

"Go and show thyself to the priest and offer for thy cleansing according as Moses commanded, so that thy healing may be established."

And here is what Moses wrote in the law:

"If the boil of the leper be healed, the priest shall command to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds alive and clean, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop.

"And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water.

"As for the living bird, he shall take it and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water.

"And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him

clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field.

"And he that is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, and he shall be clean. But he shall tarry abroad seven days, away from his house.

"On the seventh day he shall shave all the hair off his head; he shall shave his beard and his eyebrows, even all the hair from his body. And having washed his clothes again and his body, the eighth day he shall take two lambs without blemish and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish and three tenth deals of flour mingled with oil, and one log, or small measure, of oil, for an offering.

"And the priest shall present the man that is to be made clean and those things before the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

"And the priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering; and he shall put it upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot.

"And the priest shall take some of the log of oil and pour it into the palm of his own left hand;

"And the priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand and shall sprinkle of the oil with his finger seven times before the Lord.

"And of the rest of the oil that is in his left hand shall the priest put upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand and upon the great toe of his right foot, upon the blood of the trespass offering.

"And he shall pour some of it also upon the head of the man. And he shall make an atonement for him before the Lord.

"And the priest shall offer the sin offering, and make an atonement for him that is to be cleansed from his uncleanness. And afterward he shall kill the second lamb.

"And the priest shall place it upon the altar with the offerings, and the man will be purified according to the law." [1]

Now the leper whom Jesus had cleansed, instead of obeying the Master, began to lift his voice to tell of his healing. Then when it was known that Jesus had come nigh unto a leper, that he had touched the sores, he was forbidden to remain in the city.

He withdrew himself into the country, where the fame of his miracles soon drew unto him a multitude of the Jews.

When Jesus returned to Capernaum, Pharisees and doctors of the law came from Galilee, from Judea, and from Jerusalem. They wished to see and hear and confirm for themselves the remarkable acts attributed to him.

And as they brought the sick unto him from everywhere, he healed them.

And, behold, four men, carrying upon a bed a man sick of the palsy, sought means to bring him in to Jesus. But because of the multitude they could not come unto him. Then they went to the top of the house in which Jesus was. Having lifted away the skylight which gave access to the interior, they let down the man sick of the palsy, lying on his bed, into the midst before the Master.

[1] Leviticus, xiv.

And when he saw their faith, Jesus said unto the man sick of the palsy:

"My son, have confidence: thy sins are forgiven thee."

At these words, the Pharisees and the doctors appeared to be greatly shocked. And they began to reason:

"Who is this? And what are these blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Jesus perceived their thoughts. And answering, he said unto them:

"What thoughts are stirring in your hearts? Is it easier to say unto the man sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, I say unto this man, Arise, and take up thy couch and go into thine house."

Immediately the man sick of the palsy rose, and took up his bed, and departed to his own house glorifying God.

And they were all amazed. They glorified God, saying:

"We have seen strange things to-day, the like of which have never been seen!"

After these things, Jesus went away to the sea. Passing before the receipt of custom, he saw a publican, named Levi, who was called Matthew. And he said unto him: "Follow me!"

And, arising, Levy followed Jesus, for since a long time now he had vowed fidelity unto him in his heart.

III

THE MINISTRY—II

◈ THE POOL OF BETHESDA ◈
◈ RESPECT FOR THE SABBATH ◈

At this time there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Near the door through which the sheep for the sacrifice were driven into the Temple after being washed, there was a miraculous pool. In the Hebrew tongue it was called Bethesda, the House of Mercy; it was a large reservoir surrounded by five porches. In these a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, used to wait in the shade. They used to say that an angel of the Lord went down at a certain season into the pool; he troubled the water, making a great stir. Whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

Among the wretched people crowded under the porches there was frightful confusion. Each one wished to bathe his wounds or his limbs in the water at the moment when the angel of the Lord should trouble it.

Now Jesus came to the pool. And a certain man was there which had had an infirmity thirty and eight years. The Master had pity on him. And he said unto him:

"Wilt thou be made whole?"

"Lord," answered the man, sitting up on his couch, "I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me

into the pool. While I am trying to go down there, another, younger or stronger than I, steppeth down before me."

"Rise," said Jesus unto him, "take up thy bed and walk."

Now it was the Sabbath day. And there were Jews there to say unto this man:

"It is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed on this day."

The man explained, saying:

"He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk."

The Jews asked him:

"What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?"

And the man knew not how to answer. He sought Jesus in the multitude but did not find him, for Jesus had conveyed himself away.

Afterward, when he went up to the Temple to make a thank offering to the Eternal in recognition of his cure, the man found Jesus. And Jesus said unto him:

"Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee."

The man bowed himself low, and then, having found out the name of him who had delivered him of his trouble, he hastened to tell it to the Jews.

The Jews were suspicious of Jesus. They were disturbed by his doctrine and still more disturbed by the multitudes that gathered round about him. They condemned his words and criticized his acts, reproaching him bitterly for healing the sick on the Sabbath day.

Jesus said:

"My father worketh hitherto; and I work."

And the Pharisees and the doctors of the law sought to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his father, making himself equal with God.

Although he had everything to fear from these sectarians, Jesus, ignoring their threats, was not afraid to insist upon the sacred character of his mission. And he spoke unto them in this wise:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do. What things soever the Father doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son and showeth him all things that himself doeth. And he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

"For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

"The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent him.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life. He shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death into life.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.

"For, as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

"And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man."

Those who were listening—his disciples, the scribes, the multitude of the Jews—having expressed their amazement, Jesus said further:

"Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God.

"They that have done good shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

"I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge; because I seek not my own will, but the will of him who hath sent me.

"If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. There is another that beareth witness of me, and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.

"Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth.

"But I receive not testimony from man; but these things I say that ye might be saved.

"John was a burning and a shining light; and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

"But I have greater witness than that of John: the works which the Father hath given me to finish. The works that I do bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. The Father himself which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me.

"Search the Scriptures, believing that ye shall find in them eternal life; they testify of me. But ye will not come to me that ye might have life.

"I receive not honor from men. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.

"I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not. If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive!

"How can ye believe? Ye receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only!

"Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father; Moses in whom ye trust will accuse you.

"For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me.

"But if ye believe not these writings, how shall ye believe my words?"

Now Jesus was alluding to the words of the Lord, recorded by Moses:

"I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."[1]

How should the scribes, the doctors of the law, the Pharisees, confess their faith in Jesus? They feared for their own power. If they listened to him it would only be a travesty of his thought and would wrong him.

One Sabbath day the Master went through the corn fields; his disciples were hungry, and they plucked ears of corn and did eat, rubbing them in their hands. Immediately the Pharisees cried out in indignation:

"Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath day?"

Others said to Jesus:

"See, thy disciples are violating the Sabbath."

Jesus answered these false supporters:

"Have ye not read what David did when himself was

[1] Deuteronomy, xviii.

an hungered, and they which were with him? He went into the house of God, in the time of the High Priest Abiathar, and did eat the shew-bread, which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone. And he gave also to them that were with him.

"Have ye not also read in the law, that the Sabbath day the priests break the sacred rest in the Temple, and are blameless?

"Now I say unto you that in this place is one greater than the Temple."

And he said again, opposing his doctrine of love to their rigorous hypocrisy:

"But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless."

In his eyes forgiveness was more than sacrifice; he forgave, he did not blame. Distinguishing between the letter and the spirit of the law, he added:

"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath."

For God is the sovereign judge of good and evil.

The Pharisees remained silent. But they did not leave off spying upon him nor pursuing him with hatred.

Thus Jesus was in a synagogue, to which he had come, according to his custom, to speak in the name of his Father. And the scribes and the Pharisees were watching his acts.

Now there was a man there which had a withered hand.

The Master, penetrating the thoughts of his enemies, said to the man:

"Rise up there in the midst of the Temple."

The man rose and stood forth.

Then the Pharisees protested, saying:

"Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?"

"I will ask you," answered Jesus, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath day to do good or to do evil? To save life or to destroy it?"

Receiving no answer, he continued:

"What man shall there be among you that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath day."

The Pharisees remained silent. Jesus was looking at them with indignation, afflicted by the hardness of their hearts.

"Stretch forth thy hand," he said unto the man.

And the man stretched forth his hand, and his hand was restored whole as the other.

Filled with madness, the enemies of Jesus went away. They communed one with the other what they might do to the master who had defied them publicly, and they solicited the servants of Herod to join with them to put an end to him.

Warned of the plotting going on against him, Jesus decided to depart from the seaside.

The time had not yet come when the Lamb should offer himself up as a sacrifice.

From Galilee, from Judea, from Jerusalem, from Idumea, from beyond Jordan, and even from the maritime countries of Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude came unto him.

The multitude was so great that he spake to his disciples, that a small boat should wait upon him so that he could get into it; for cripples and those suffering in any way threw themselves upon him to touch his feet, his hands, or his coat.

And so was accomplished that which was said by Isaiah, the prophet:

"Behold my servant, whom I have chosen, whom I uphold, in whom my soul delighteth. I have put my spirit upon him. He will announce justice to the nations.

"He will not dispute nor cry nor cause his voice to be heard in public places.

"A bruised reed shall he not break; he will not quench the lamp that is still burning, until that which he hath done shall make justice to triumph on earth. And the people shall hope in his law." [1]

◆ THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT ◆

At that time Jesus went into a mountain place between Capernaum and the lake of Tiberias. When he had climbed to the summit he spent the night there praying to God. This is why they called this mountain the mount of the Beatitudes.

The hatred with which the Pharisees were surrounding him warned the Rabbi of trials near at hand. The prophets, in predicting his coming, had they not announced his ignominious death? He was not discouraged, but he felt that he needed to fortify his soul by communion alone with his Father.

And then, after profound meditation, he called his

[1] Isaiah, xlii.

disciples, when the day dawned. And among them he chose twelve to whom he gave the name of apostles. After him, they were to teach the people. And he gave them power to heal the sick and drive away demons.

When the High Priest was officiating in the Temple, he used to wear twelve precious stones upon his breast, a symbol of the twelve tribes of Israel.

That is why Jesus established twelve apostles. With him the symbol became human. Among the group of disciples did he take the best educated, those who by their social position would find confidence among the people the most easily, the people who are always inclined to believe men upon whom fortune shines? No, he chose humble men, showing in this way his scorn for wealth, and showing also that it was not for them that he was sent.

At the very first Jesus chose Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother; then he took James and John, sons of Zebedee, Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas, and Matthew the publican; his cousins, James the Less, and Jude surnamed Thaddeus, both sons of Alpheus; and finally Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot.

Before being saints, the apostles were to be men, with all the failings of men. They were to misunderstand the intentions of their master. His acts, his words, they would not always comprehend.

Philip and Thomas were slow-minded, like Simon Peter, who, however, enjoyed great authority over the little group of twelve.

James the Less and Thaddeus, they were to have great difficulty in penetrating the real meaning of the mission of Jesus; they came, so they thought, to increase the power of Israel!

James and John had such fiery natures that the master called them the sons of thunder.

All showed themselves to be more or less envious, jealous, lacking in courage: they were to abandon the Son of man, deny him in the hour of danger. Judas was to betray him.

When he had chosen the twelve, Jesus came down with them from the mountain. And as he came, he met a great number of disciples and Jews who had come to hear him. And so he stopped and, beginning to speak, he taught them.

Jesus spoke in aphorisms and picturesque parables. Many of his precepts go against social prejudices: scorn of the rich and of money dominates his teaching.

Beside a poor man a rich one is an injustice.

Among the rich, there is no spiritual life. They care for nothing but their money and their material well-being. Their souls are stifled by too well satisfied flesh.

Now the kingdom of Jesus was not of this world. The Master wished that his people should have regard only for the things of the Kingdom of God.

Ambition, pride, envy, hatred, arouse in the heart pity and disgust: what are our human vanities compared with Eternity, with which he is concerned, Eternity which he has brought in the folds of his garment?

And here is what he said to his disciples upon the mountain:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

"Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.

"Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

"Blessed are ye when men shall hate you and when they shall separate you from their company and shall reproach you and shall speak falsely against you, with all harm, because of me, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.

"Rejoice and leap for joy! Your reward shall be great in Heaven. In like manner their fathers persecuted the prophets, who were before you."

This is the doctrine of non-resistance to evil, to violence: Jesus glorifies the humble and the weak. What good would it do them to revolt? Could they hope for victory? Let them be resigned: they will disarm the wicked and win Heaven, and in Heaven justice and an end to all their troubles. For those who have lived here below in poverty shall know prosperity, power, and happiness in the bosom of the Eternal.

But if the reign of the poor is to come, that of the rich can last only in this world.

"Woe unto you that are rich," said Jesus, "for ye have received your consolation!

"Woe unto you that are full, for ye shall hunger!

"Woe unto you that laugh, for ye shall groan and weep many tears!

"Woe unto you when men shall celebrate your virtues, for so did their fathers those of the false prophets!"

Jesus said more to his disciples, upon the mountain:

"Ye are the salt of the earth. But if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is to be cast out under the feet of men.

"Ye are the light of the world. They do not build a city upon a mountain, in order to hide it. Men do not light a candle and put it under a bushel, or under the bed; on a candlestick it lights the whole house.

"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven."

They talked with him about the law, the word of the prophets, and of the respect that every Jew owed these matters. He did not wish them to believe that he came to undo their instruction.

"I am come not to destroy but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Heaven and earth shall not pass before all that is written in the law shall be accomplished. Not one jot or one tittle shall be forgotten.

"Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

"For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."

He did not abolish the law, but he amended it.

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time: Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be brought to judgment.

"I say unto thee that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be damned. Whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, that is, Empty-head, shall be condemned by the Sanhedrim, and he who calls his brother a fool deserves hell fire.

"If, then, at the moment when thou bringest a gift to the altar thou rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, hasten to be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift.

"While thou art in the way with thine adversary, agree with him quickly. Thou shalt thus avoid putting thyself into the hands of the judge, from the judge into the hands of the sergeant, and from the sergeant into prison.

"Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing."

And here are more of his words of wisdom and goodness:

"Ye have heard that it was said of old: Thou shalt not commit adultery.

"But I say unto thee that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath already committed adultery in his heart.

"And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee. Better to lose one member than to have thy whole body cast into hell.

"And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee. Better to lose one member than to have thy whole body cast into hell.

"It hath been said, If a man repudiate his wife, let him give her a bill of divorcement.

"But I say unto you, He who repudiates his wife, saving for adultery, causeth her to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry this woman committeth adultery."

Jesus required of all men the most scrupulous honesty. There was no need to swear in the name of God. The most simple agreement was inviolable.

"Ye have heard it said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths.

"But I say unto you, Swear not by Heaven, for it is the throne of God; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.

"Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

"But say simply, Yea, or, Nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

"But I say unto you that ye resist not evil. Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

"And if any man will sue thee to take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

"And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

"Give to him that asketh thee, and ask nothing of him that hath borrowed from thee."

To Jesus all men are brothers; He does not distinguish between our friends and our enemies.

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy.

"I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that harm you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you;

"That ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

"Do unto others as ye would have them do unto you.

"For if ye love them only which love you, what reward have ye? Do not men who lead wrong lives love those that love them?

"If ye welcome your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not men who lead wrong lives welcome one another?

"If ye do good only unto those who do good unto you, what is owed to you? Would not evil men do as much?

"If ye lend only to those who would be able to lend unto you, why should ye win praise? Bad men lend in the same manner.

"Love your enemies, do good, and lend without hope of return. Your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the sons of the Most High, who is good to the ungrateful and the wicked.

"Be merciful, as your Father in Heaven is merciful."

After dealing with the law and the word of the prophets, Jesus formulated admirable precepts concerning alms, prayer, forgiveness of sin, fasting.

"If ye do alms publicly to win praise," said he, "ask no reward of God.

"Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have the glory of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.

"But when thou doest alms, let it be in secret; let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth. The Father who sees all will take account of thee.

"Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.

"But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head with fragrant oil and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast. The father who sees all will take account of thee.

"And when thou prayest thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.

"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door pray to thy Father which is in secret. The Father who sees all will take account of thee.

"But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do, for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

"Be not ye therefore like unto them; for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him.

"After this manner therefore pray ye:

"Our Father which are in Heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen."

And Jesus said:

"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you.

"But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

The words of Jesus are both realistic and lyric; they are always picturesque and poetic. His stories are full of flavor when they are not sublime!

To the Jews who came to hear him upon the mountain he preached scorn of material things. He taught them that the real treasures are the riches of the soul.

"Lay not up for yourself treasures upon earth, where moth and rust corrupt and where thieves break through and steal.

"Lay up treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust nor thieves are.

"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also!

"The light of the body is the eye. If thine eye be pure, all is pure, and thy whole being shall be full of light; if thine eye is impure, thy whole being shall be plunged into darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

"Beware lest the light that is in thee be darkness.

"If thy whole body is in the light, with no part re-

maining in darkness, all will be light within thee, like as when a great fire is before thee.

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.

"Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat and the body more than raiment?

"Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap nor gather into barns. Yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than the fowls of the air?

"Which of you by taking thought can add a cubit unto his stature?

"If ye be powerless to do the smallest thing, why trouble about the rest?

"And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field: they toil not, neither do they spin:

"And yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these!

"Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

"Therefore take no thought saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

"For after all these things do the pagans seek. Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

"But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

"Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take care of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

"Little flock, fear not, for it hath pleased the Father to give you the kingdom."

Jesus commands mercy and lifts his voice against the sin of pride.

"Judge not, that ye be not judged. Blame not, and ye shall not be blamed. Pardon, and ye shall be pardoned. For it shall be measured to you with what measure ye mete.

"Give and ye shall receive: thy soul shall be recompensed with good measure, pressed down, shaken, running over.

"And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye and not the beam which is in thine own?

"How canst thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye, and, behold, a beam is in thine own? Hypocrite! First cast out the beam out of thine own eye, then shalt thou cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

Jesus says again:

"Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet and turn again and rend you.

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

"Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father

which is in Heaven give good gifts to them that ask him?

"The servant is not greater than the master; but every servant is perfect when he is like his master who is full of humility before God."

And Jesus spoke in these parables to those who listened to him upon the mountain:

"Can the blind lead the blind? Shall they both not fall into the ditch?

"Enter ye in at the strait gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

"Beware of false prophets! They cover with sheep's clothing the wolf which is in them.

"Ye shall know them by their fruits! Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?

"A good tree bringeth forth good fruit; a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. Now every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire!

"From the good treasure of his heart a good man bringeth forth only good; from the rottenness of his heart a man bringeth forth only evil. For the mouth speaketh of the fullness of the heart."

And here is the end of the Sermon on the Mount:

"Those who say unto me, Lord! Lord! shall not all enter the Kingdom of Heaven. But he shall enter there who doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven.

"Why do ye call unto me, Lord! Lord! if ye do not that which I say unto you?

"Many will say unto me in that day, Lord! Lord! have we not prophesied in thy name; and cast out devils in thy name; accomplished miracles in thy name?

"And I will say unto them before all, I never knew you! Depart from me, ye that work iniquity!

"Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock; the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew and beat upon that house: and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock.

"And every one that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended and the floods came and the wind blew and beat upon the house and it fell: and it was only a mass of ruins!"

◈ THE CENTURION'S SERVANT ◈ A MAN OF NAIN RAISED FROM THE DEAD ◈

Now when he had ended these sayings, he was come down from the mountain, followed by a great multitude. And he resolved that he would return to Capernaum.

Now a centurion who was at the garrison in that city had a servant who was dear to him and was sick and ready to die. And when he heard of the presence of the Master in Capernaum, he asked the elders of the city to go unto Jesus beseeching him that he would come and heal the dying man. A stranger in that country, a pagan by religion, he did not dare to go before the Master.

The Jews granted his request, for he was esteemed by all. They approached Jesus and told him of the plea of the officer.

"He is worthy for whom thou shouldst do it," they said unto him.

To persuade him they added that the centurion loved the Jews. He had built them a synagogue.

"I will go and heal his servant," said Jesus.

As he approached the dwelling of the Roman, the man himself came to meet him.

"Lord," he said with humility, "trouble not thyself, for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter unto my roof. Wherefore neither did I dare to find thee for myself. But only say a word, and my servant shall be healed. Although I am only a man set under authority, I say to one of the soldiers whom I command, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh. And if I say unto my servant, Do this, he doeth it."

What would it be, then, if the Master gave a command!

"Verily," said Jesus to them that had come with him, "verily, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel!"

And he added:

"I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven. And the children of the Kingdom" (the Jews that had not believed on his word!) "shall be cast into outer darkness. And there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Then, turning toward the centurion:

"Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee."

And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.

And it came to pass on the following day that Jesus went to Nain, with several of his disciples and much people. When he came nigh to one of the gates of the city, he heard lamentations and funeral chants. Behold, they were carrying a dead man out to the tomb. He was lying upon a bier and was covered with flowers. His mother, a widow, was weeping, for this was her only son. And many of the people of the city of Nain were with her in the procession.

Moved with compassion, Jesus said unto the woman: "Weep no more!"

Then he went near unto the bier and stretched forth his hand.

Upon seeing him the bearers stood still, the mourners ceased their cries. And Jesus lifted up his voice:

"Young man, I say unto thee, Arise!"

And, behold, he that was dead sat up upon the bier and began to speak.

And Jesus gave him to his mother.

There came fear and admiration upon all that were there, and they glorified God, saying:

"A great prophet is risen up among us; God hath visited his people!"

And the rumor of this latest miracle went forth throughout all Judea and throughout the region round about.

◆ THE DISCIPLES OF JOHN ◆

Now all these things were told unto John. In the prison where Herod Antipas had held him for six months, the Baptist had continually received news of the works

of Jesus. What he heard strengthened in him the conviction that the Master was the Messiah expected and announced by him. John's disciples did not share in this belief. Certain sayings of Jesus surprised them, for they did not understand. And were they not jealous of the spread of the renown of Jesus while their master groaned in chains?

John wanted to reassure them and convince them. He chose two and sent them to Jesus to ask questions.

These men came to Jesus and said:

"John the Baptist sent us to ask thee, Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?"

Now there were round about him the sick, the halt, those possessed of the devil, the blind. And Jesus was healing them all.

Then he said unto these men:

"Go your way and tell John what things ye have seen and heard: how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached."

And for those that criticize him, that accuse him of not respecting the Sabbath, and of infringing the petty rules invented by the hypocritical virtue of scribes and doctors of the law, he adds:

"Blessed is he to whom I shall not be a cause for scandal and stumbling."

When these men had gone away, Jesus began to talk to the people about John, for he knew that the Jews hesitated to accept the Forerunner as a prophet.

"What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

"But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment?

"They that wear soft clothing, and who live in luxury, dwell in kings' houses.

"But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet: for this is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

"Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater prophet than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he."

John is great according to the law of Moses; he that shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven shall be greater, for he shall be near the Father.

"Now," said Jesus, "all the prophets and the law prophesied until John" (they foretold the Christ); "and from the days of John until now the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." For Jesus was come according to the word of the Baptist, who is "the new Elias which was for to come." Already "the violent," the courageous, "ravish him"; they enter upon his footsteps.

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

The people and the publicans, who received the baptism of John, have glorified God; but the Pharisees and the doctors of the law, who scorned this baptism, have refused the designs that God had for them.

And speaking of these unbelievers, Jesus said:

"But whereunto shall I liken the men of this generation? It is like children sitting in the markets and calling unto their fellows, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.

"For John came, neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, He is possessed of a devil.

"The Son of man came eating and drinking, and you say, This man loves to eat and to drink, a friend of publicans and of sinners."

This the Pharisees do and say, the scribes, and all those impenitents who love to argue for the sake of arguing, who always find some reason to question evidence itself.

But Jesus declared:

"Wisdom is justified of her children."

The will of God was done by all those who inclined themselves before the prophet, before him who had preceded the Christ, and before Jesus himself.

After having denounced the enemies of the truth, the Master upbraided the cities which did not repent, although he had done miracles within their walls.

"Woe unto thee, Chorazin!" said he. "Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been accomplished in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

"But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

"And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto Heaven, shalt be brought down to hell. For if the miracles done in thy walls had been done in Sodom, it would still be standing.

"But verily I say unto you, on the day of judgment, the people of Sodom shall be treated with less rigor than you."

◈ MARY MAGDALENE ◈

In those days a Pharisee who dwelt in Nain begged Jesus to share a meal with him. Although this Jew belonged to the sect of his enemies, the Master accepted the invitation.

Now there was in the city a woman of evil ways called Mary Magdalene. She had belonged in marriage to a certain Papus, son of Juda and doctor of the law. Her husband had made her unhappy, and she allowed herself to be seduced by an officer called Pandira. She followed him to Magdala, where it was not long before she abandoned her body to evil pleasure.

Papus repudiated her without scruple, for he had no intention of allowing his wife's disgrace to stain his honor.

Mary Magdalene had great beauty, and the Jews thronged to her house. And they contested for her favor. Rich men gave her gold, jewels, chests full of precious stones, priceless veils, sachets perfumed with incense, rugs that were like meadows strewn with flowers in springtime.

Clever men sought to win her with marvelous stories. Artists praised her in pictures and in music.*

They used to sing:

"Behold, thou art fair, my love, thou art fair!

"Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my love; thou hast ravished my heart with a glance, with one of the shining necklaces upon thy bosom.

"Honey and milk are under thy tongue, and the fragrance of thy tunics wafts to me the perfume of Lebanon.

"Thy cheeks are like a basket of aromatic herbs, like sweet-smelling flowers; thy lips are touched with myrrh.

"Thy hands are rings of gold, enriched with topazes.

"Thy body is like unto polished ivory overlaid with sapphires.

"Thy breasts are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies.

"Thy belly is like an heap of wheat set about with lilies.

"My beloved is beautiful as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners.

"O fountain of gardens! O wells of fresh water! O brooks of Lebanon!

"How much better is thy love than wine, my beloved, and thy breath is sweeter than clover!

"Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm. Love is as strong as death; jealousy is as unquenchable as the fires of hell: their embraces are like fire, a flame of the Eternal.

"I charge you, daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love until she pleases."[1]

Did Mary Magdalene know Jesus? No doubt she had met him. Perhaps she had mingled with the crowds that thronged to hear him and had been touched by the gentleness of his face and of his words. She may have witnessed the miraculous cures that he wrought all along the way, the resurrection of the son of the widow of Nain. And she may have known also of his generosity to the woman of Samaria. Be that as it may, when she learned of the presence of the Master at the house of Simon the Pharisee, she slipped into the banquet hall and seated herself back of him.

[1]Song of Songs.

She was so deeply moved, the contrition in her soul was so great, that her tears, rolling down her cheeks, fell on the feet of Jesus as he reclined on a couch in the Oriental manner. And Mary, in witness of her humility, wiped the feet of the Master with her beautiful hair; she kissed them and anointed them with perfumed ointment contained in an alabaster box.

Simon the Pharisee, pondering, marveled that he allowed it.

"This man, if he were a prophet," he reflected, "would have known who and what manner of woman this is, and of her scandalous life."

Jesus, reading the man's thoughts, said unto him:

"Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee."

"Master, say on," said he.

"There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence and the other fifty. And as neither the one nor the other could pay, he forgave them both. Which man, in your opinion, would be the more grateful?"

"He to whom he forgave the most."

"Thou hast rightly judged," said Jesus.

Then pointing to Mary Magdalene:

"Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house; thou didst not pour water upon my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head.

"Thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman since the time she came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

"My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but she hath anointed my feet with perfumed ointment.

"Wherefore I say unto thee, much shall be forgiven her, for she has loved much.

"To whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."

Then Jesus said to Mary Magdalene:

"Woman, thy sins are forgiven thee."

All the guests of Simon looked at one another, were astonished, and asked:

"Who is this who can even forgive sins?"

And Jesus, aiding the sinner to rise, spoke to her once more:

"Thy faith hath saved thee. Go in peace."

From that time, delivered from the seven demons that dwelt in her, Mary Magdalene followed Jesus. She put away the jewels, the bright colored garments, and the red veil of the sinning woman, to take on the black veil of repentance and the simple dress of the poor.

Several women joined her, like her purified of evil spirits or cleansed of disease. Everywhere the Master went to proclaim the Kingdom of Heaven, they were to be seen mingling with the apostles. One was named Johanna. She was the wife of a steward of Herod's, called Chuza. Another was called Susanna. And all helped Jesus with their money.*

◈ BEELZEBUB ◈

One day when the Master was at Capernaum, so great a multitude came to see him that he and his disciples found not a moment for their meal.

Then was brought unto him one possessed of a devil, blind and dumb. And he healed him so that he spake and saw.

"Is not this the son of David?" cried the people, filled with admiration.

But the Pharisees and the scribes who had come from Jerusalem were angered, saying:

"This fellow doth not cast out devils but by Beelzebub, the prince of devils."

Then Jesus spake to them on this wise:

"How can Satan cast out Satan?

"Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; every city divided against itself shall not stand.

"Likewise if Satan is in revolt against himself, if he is divided against himself, he cannot stand. His end is near.

"When a strong man is armed and is watching at the gate of his house, his goods are safe. But if a stronger man come who disarms him and binds him, then that one plunders the house."

Jesus cleanses men possessed of devils because he has triumphed over Satan. How do the disciples of the priests exorcise?

"If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your disciples cast them out?"

Was it not by the name of Jehovah?

"And," said Jesus, "your disciples will be your own judges.

"If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then it is true that the Kingdom of God is come unto you.

"He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.

"Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven."

No pardon for him who blasphemes God.

And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of

man shall obtain mercy: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age nor in the age to come. His condemnation is eternal.

"Say that the tree is good and his fruit good, or say that the tree is corrupt and his fruit corrupt. For the tree is known by his fruit."

Do not put to the account of Satan that which belongs to the account of God.

"O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things! Out of the heart the mouth speaketh.

"Know that in the day of judgment men shall give account of every idle word. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

Now the scribes, in spite of the stern sayings of the Master, make their way through the multitudes and come unto him.

"Master," they say unto him, "canst thou not perform a miracle before us?"

Incensed by their boldness, Jesus replies, without directly addressing the hypocrites:

"An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign. Verily I say unto you, there shall no sign be given unto it but the sign of the prophet Jonas. As Jonas was a miracle unto the men of Nineveh, the Son of man shall be one unto this generation. Jonas was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; likewise shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

Jonas foretold the destruction of Nineveh, but because her people repented, the city was spared by the Lord. Why should not the Jews humble themselves?

"Behold," said Jesus, "a greater than Jonas is here."

Also, "In the day of judgment, the men of Nineveh shall rise against them and shall condemn them.

"In the same manner, the queen of the south shall rise up in judgment with this generation and shall condemn it, for she did not hesitate to come from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon.

"Behold, a greater than Solomon is here."

◈ SOLOMON AND THE QUEEN OF SHEBA ◈

The renown of King Solomon had spread to Arabia, for he was a powerful prince and a great magician. There was no sickness that he could not heal. The genii were in his service, and he had dominion over the demons, who obeyed him with joy.

In his magnificence, he gave men lessons in humility. "The birth of a king or a prince," he used to say, "is not different from that of every man; there is but one way to enter this world, as there is but one way to leave it."

His knowledge equaled his wisdom. He knew the names of all the stars, together with their secrets. He spoke seventy languages, and was familiar with the influence of precious stones upon the destiny of men: one protects chastity, another takes away fever, and a third puts evil spirits to flight.

The language of animals was clear to him. Also he understands what the birds say to one another, even though the notes and the songs always seem to be the same.

We have learned from him that the peacock cries: "As ye judge, so also ye shall be judged." That in his song the nightingale gives us this counsel: "Be moderate

in thy desires; there is no greater good." That the turtle-dove says sadly: "Better far that the creature had never been created." That the lapwing says: "He that knows not pity shall be pitied by no one." And the bird Syrdus: "Sinners, be converted to God." And the swallow: "Do good, and thou shalt receive a reward." And the pelican: "For praised be the Lord, in Heaven and upon the earth." And the pigeon: "Everything passes away; God alone is eternal." And the eagle: "There is no life so long that it does not end in death." And the cock: "Think on thy Creator, O man, who art great in pride and small in reason."

In those days, the land of Sheba was a diadem upon the brow of the universe. Now it came to pass that the queen of that marvelous country, whose name was Balkis, having heard men speak of the power and wisdom of Solomon, was curious to meet so great a prince. She assembled a numerous suite, ordered that spices, gold, rugs, and precious stones be laden upon camels, and went her way toward Jerusalem.

When the great King Solomon learned that the Queen of Sheba was on her way to pay him a visit, he wished her to be received with honor.

First, as he was obeyed by the genii, he commanded the jinn, who are the deft spirits, to weave a carpet nine parasangs long (that is, nine times four thousand eight hundred yards), and to lay it upon the steps of his throne, on the side toward the south. On the east, up to the carpet, he built a wall made of gold; a wall of silver was on the west.

And he further ordered the most rare and the most magnificent animals, as well as all the demons and the

genii, to range themselves soberly on the two sides of the carpet.

When Balkis saw this she was greatly surprised. The carpet upon which she trod was enriched with such gay colors, the silk in the pile was so high and it stretched so far, that at first she thought of throwing away the rugs she was bringing as a present to Solomon, esteeming them unworthy of such a ruler.

And the further she advanced the more her amazement grew, because of the extraordinary animals, the wonderful birds, the genii, and the demons that formed a double line on either side of her.

Solomon welcomed her with much grace, and, altogether reassured, she told him everything that was in her heart.

The king was fortunate enough to be able to answer all the obscure questions that she asked him; he heard nothing that he could not explain.

And so the Queen of the South marveled at such great knowledge and wisdom. Nor could she contain her admiration for the palace that Solomon had built for himself. She was beside herself at the sight of the luxury of the royal table, the apartments of the servants, of all the magnificence, the uniforms of the officers, the cup bearers, and the great number of animals offered in sacrifice in the house of the Lord.

She saw the chariots and the horsemen of the army; there were fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen. She saw the Temple, the walls of which were lined with gold and precious stones. She saw the cherubim with wings twenty elbow lengths long. She saw the altar made of bronze, the sea of bronze, and the great bronze bulls that supported it, in the form of a circle beneath it. She saw the ten golden chandeliers, made

according to a fitting pattern, and the hundred golden goblets.

And she said unto the king:

"What I heard tell of thee in my country, thy power and thy wisdom, is true.

"I confess I did not believe what was told me. But I came, mine eyes have seen, and the half was not told me. Thy wisdom and thy power go far beyond what rumor had taught me.

"Happy are thy people, happy thy servants. They are continually before thee; they profit continually by thy wisdom.

"Blessed be the Lord thy God, who hath placed thee upon the throne of Israel. It is because the Lord loves Israel that he hath established thee king to do the right and to render justice."

And the Queen of Sheba gave unto King Solomon one hundred and twenty talents of gold and aromatic herbs and precious stones in profusion.

And King Solomon gave to the Queen of Sheba all that she could have wished beyond what he had already given her.

Then she went her way and returned to her own country, she, her servants, and her camels laden with royal gifts.[1]

◈ THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN ◈

Now Jesus, continuing to speak to the people, taught them in this parable: "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and finding none. And so he says to himself, I will return

[1] Legend.

unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh he findeth it empty and swept and garnished.

"Then goeth he and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself. They enter in and dwell there. And the last state of that man is worse than the first.

"Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation of Pharisees."

For the people of Israel, through wrong-doing, rejected the protection of God. They fell and rose and fell again, repudiating sin only to be plunged deeper into sin, each time separating themselves further from Heavenly bliss.

And a woman cried out:

"Blessed is the womb that bare thee and the paps which thou hast sucked!"

Jesus answered:

"Yea, rather are they blessed that hear the word of God and keep it."

At that moment, Mary his mother, and those whom he used to call his brothers, wished to come to him. James and Jude, the son of Alpheus, were among his disciples, but Joseph and Simon affected to scorn him.

"He has lost his senses," they were saying.

And they would have taken him. Some one told Jesus:

"Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee."

"Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?"

Stretching forth his hand toward his disciples and glancing at those seated round about him, he added:

"Behold my mother and my brethren. Whosoever shall

do the will of my Father which is in Heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother."

The same day went Jesus to the lake of Gennesaret, and he lay down upon the shore. Soon a great multitude of people pressed about him. He went into a ship and sat facing the bank, and he spake many things unto the Jews in parables:

"A sower went forth to sow his field. And it came to pass as he sowed, some fell by the wayside. The fowls devoured it up. And some fell on stony places, where they had not much earth, and forthwith they sprung up. And when the sun was up they were scorched because they had no root.

"And some fell among the thorns; and the thorns sprung up and choked them.

"But others fell into good ground and brought forth fruit; some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred.

"He that hath ears to hear, let him ear," concluded Jesus.

When they were alone with him the disciples asked him why he spoke in this way; the meaning of the parable escaped them. Jesus answered them:

"I speak in this way because unto you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God. It is not so with them that are without. With them all these things are done in parables. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath."

He that has faith shall receive much; he shall be in abundance, for the Kingdom of Heaven is his. He that is without faith has nothing.

"That is why I speak in parables," said Jesus; "the Jews see without seeing, they hear without hearing, and they do not understand."

Thus was accomplished that which the Lord had commanded unto Isaiah the prophet:

"Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat and make their ears heavy and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their hearts and convert and be healed."

"But blessed are your eyes," continued Jesus, "for they see; and your ears, for they hear.

"Verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."

The disciples were silent, and he said unto them:

"Know ye not this parable? And how then will ye know the others?

"Hear ye therefore: the seed is the word of God; the sower sows the word.

"When any one heareth the word of the Kingdom of God and understandeth it not, he is like the wayside upon which the seed falleth: Satan cometh and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart.

"But he that receiveth and heareth the word with joy is like the seed fallen on stony places: his faith hath no deep root; he lacketh constancy, and when persecution ariseth he falleth into sin.

"And he who heareth the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, that one is like the ground inhabited by thorns.

"But he who receiveth the word with an honest heart

and understandeth, he is like the good ground where the seed groweth: and one grain bringeth forth thirty grains, another sixty, another an hundred."

The disciples marveled. Jesus added:

"So is the Kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.

"For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. And when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come."

When the sower has sowed the seed, it fructifies in the furrow, without the help of man. When the corn is ripe, the harvester comes. So it is with Christ: having sown the word of God, he will come at harvest time.

Did they understand? He fears not.

And he found new parables.

"To what can the Kingdom of Heaven be likened?" he said.

"A man sowed good seed in his field. But while men slept, his enemy came, sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

"But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants came and said unto their master, "Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? From whence then hath it tares?

"An enemy hath done this.

"Wilt thou then that we go and gather up the tares?

"Nay, lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. When the time is come, I will say to the

reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat and carry it into my barn.

"The Kingdom of Heaven again is comparable in its growth to a grain of mustard seed, which is the least of the seeds, but when it groweth up is as high as a tree, so that the birds of the air make their nests in its branches."

In its power, said the Master, "the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened."

And Jesus continued to speak to them, so that the word of David might be accomplished:

"I shall open my mouth, and in parables I shall publish the ancient secrets that we have heard and known, the things which our fathers have told.

"We will not hide them from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done." [1]

That is why Jesus told his disciples that the truth was to be revealed and not kept secret.

"Does a man light a candle to put it under a bushel, or under a bed? Do they not rather put it on a candlestick?

"Nothing is hidden that ought not to be discovered; nothing is secret that ought not be to brought out to the daylight.

"Who hath ears to hear let him hear."

In spite of their good-will the disciples did not entirely penetrate to the meaning of these allegories. And

[1] Psalms, lxxviii.

when Jesus sent away the multitude of the Jews that had gathered upon the shore, and had returned to the house in Capernaum, his disciples begged him to explain the parable of the tares.

And Jesus said unto them:

"He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the Kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

"As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be at the end of time. The Son of man shall send forth his angels; and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity and shall cast them into a furnace of fire.

"And there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

"Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father."

On this subject, the Master was inexhaustible. He said:

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a treasure hid in a field; the which, when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field."

Another parable:

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls; who when he had found one pearl at great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it."

Another parable:

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a net which was cast into the sea. When they drew it to the shore they found it full of fish of every kind: they gathered the good into baskets, and cast the bad into the sea.

"So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall sever the wicked from among the just and shall cast them into the furnace of fire.

"And there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

"Do you understand?"

"Yea, Lord," answered the disciples.

"Verily," concluded Jesus, "that is why every doctor instructed in divine things is like a householder which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."

For as the householder distributes in favor of his children all his possessions old or new, so the apostles were to draw from the prophets and from the doctrine of Jesus the words of love and of faith to guide men to the Kingdom of Heaven.

On the evening of a beautiful day, Jesus, who had spoken to the people on the shores of the lake of Gennesaret, needed to rest. And when he was entered into a ship, he said to his disciples:

"Let us pass over unto the other side."

At that moment a scribe came out of the crowd and cried:

"Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest."

But Jesus replied:

"Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests: the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."

The ships were going out when a disciple came running. Tears were flowing down from his eyes, for his father had just died.

"Lord," he said, "before I go, suffer me first to go and bury my father."

How was it that Jesus did not allow the pious grief of this son? He said, however:

"Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead."

Those who do not believe on the word of the Son of God, and on the Father which sent him, are as dead as the father of this disciple. Attached to earthly things, they have no conception of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Now another disciple in turn said:

"Lord, I am ready to follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell which are at home in my house."

To him Jesus replied:

"No man, having put his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God."

He who traces the furrow of the Lord allows nothing to distract him from his work. He who loves the Son of man believes all who follow him. For all that is not of him is nothing; he alone is the Truth.

◈ JESUS CALMS THE TEMPEST ◈ THE DEMONIACS IN THE COUNTRY OF THE GERGESENES ◈

The ship in which Jesus was, moved away, followed by other ships in which were the disciples. In the prow the Master fell asleep. Suddenly a whirlwind raised the waters of the sea: the ships were tossed about; the waves threatened to sink them. Seized with fear, the disciples awakened Jesus:

"Master! Master! We are perishing; wilt thou not come to our aid?"

"Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" said Jesus.

He arose, and with authority he spoke to the wind and to the sea. To the wind he said:

"Be quiet."

To the sea he said:

"Be still."

The wind ceased to blow; the waves became peaceful; there was a great calm.

"What manner of man is this who commands the wind and the sea, and the wind and the sea obey him?" asked the disciples.

Jesus had just put foot upon the shore, in the country of the Gadarenes, which is across from Galilee, when a man possessed of demons rushed toward him.

Banished from the city, this man lived in tombs, like the wild animals. He wore no clothes, and his body was covered with sores, for he used to wound himself with stones. No one could control him. They bound him with chains; they put irons on his feet: he broke the chains and the fetters and fled into the desert, where he could be heard crying day and night.

At the sight of Jesus he cried with a loud voice:

"What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou son of the Most High God," he said, throwing himself upon the ground. "Art thou come to torment me aforetime?"

It was the demon speaking through him, for already Jesus was commanding:

"Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit."

And, as the man possessed continued to cry, Jesus asked:

"What is thy name?"

"My name is Legion," replied the man, for several demons were in him. And they besought the Master that he would not plunge them into the abyss.

Now there was a great herd there of swine feeding in the mountain.

"Master," besought the demons, "send us into the swine, that we may enter into them."

"Go!" said Jesus.

And then the unclean spirits went out of the man and entered into the swine. But the swine ran violently into the sea (they were about two thousand) and were drowned.

Frightened, they that fed the swine fled and told it everywhere in their own way. And people came from the city and the country to see Jesus. And, behold, the man possessed of unclean spirits was in his right mind, his nakedness was covered, and he was sitting at the feet of the Master.

Those who had witnessed the miracle told the others who were arriving how Jesus had cast out the unclean spirits. Now the people were desolate because their swine were drowned in the sea. And they began to pray Jesus to leave the country, for they were seized with a great fear.

Jesus entered the ship that had brought him thither.

"Master," implored the man that had been possessed with the devils, "take me with thee."

But Jesus sent him away, saying:

"Go home to thy house and tell of the great things the Lord hath done for thee."

And the man departed, publishing to all the city the works of the Son of man.

◈ THE FEAST OF LEVI ◈ THE WOMAN WITH THE ISSUE OF BLOOD ◈ JAIRU'S DAUGHTER ◈

Now Jesus returned to Capernaum. And it happened that the publican Levi, he who was called Matthew,

made him a great feast, at which there were present, with the disciples, a number of publicans scorned by the Jews, and other men of ill repute.

Scandalized, the Pharisees and the scribes came and said unto his disciples:

"Why does your master eat with these people?"

It was Jesus who answered them, for he had heard their question.

"They that are whole," said he, "need not a physician; but they that are sick. Go and meditate: I teach pity, not sacrifices. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

The scribes had scarcely withdrawn when the disciples of John the Baptist came and said unto him:

"Why do we and the Pharisees fast, while your disciples eat and drink?"

According to the law, the scribes used to fast four times a year, but the Pharisees, who were extreme, fasted twice a week.

Jesus said unto the disciples of John:

"Can the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them?"

Then, alluding to his approaching end, he added:

"But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away, and then they shall fast."

And again he spoke in a parable:

"No man seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment, else the new piece taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse.

"And no man putteth new wine into old bottles, else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish. But they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.

"No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new; the old is better."

New doctrine requires new rites, but those who are used to old doctrine declare it to be better than the new.

While Jesus spake these things unto them, behold there came a high dignitary of the synagogue named Jairus, who threw himself at his feet.

"Master," he groaned, "my child, my only daughter, lieth at the point of death; perhaps even now she is dead; I pray thee come and lay thy hands on her: that she may be healed, and she shall live."

His grief and his faith were so great that Jesus, touched with pity, arose straightway.

Now in the throng before the house of Levi there was a woman which had had an issue of blood for twelve years. She had spent all that she had in taking care of herself, but the more she consulted physicians the worse her malady became. And she wished to come to the Master, for she had been told about the miracles:

"If I may touch but his garment, I shall be healed."

When Jesus walked among the crowds, she caught the hem of his garment. And, in the same moment, the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague.

"Who touched me?" asked Jesus.

Instead of answering, the poor woman was trembling in all her limbs.

Then Peter and the other disciples cried:

"Thou wouldst know who it is that hath touched thee? Dost thou not see, Master, the people press about thee?"

But Jesus said:

"I know that some one touched me, for I felt a virtue leaving me."

And as his glance rested upon Veronica, for that was the name of the woman, she fell at his feet, confessing the truth.

"My daughter," said Jesus, lifting her to her feet, "be of good comfort and go in peace; thy faith hath made thee whole."

Veronica went away. When she returned to her home, in the city of Cæsarea Philippi, she put up a bronze monument to commemorate the miraculous cure. Veronica was represented there at the feet of the Master. Now it came to pass that a plant grew around the monument. When it had climbed high enough upon the monument to reach the hem of the garment of Jesus, it healed all those who put a bit of it on their sores.[1]

And, behold, Jesus had scarcely healed Veronica when the servants of Jairus, running, came to him and said:

"It is useless to beseech the Master. Thy daughter is dead."

But Jesus told the father not to be afraid, not to despair:

"Fear not, only believe, and she shall be made whole."

Before the house of Jairus, already the mourners and the musicians were making a great noise for the funeral ceremony.

"Why make ye this ado, and weep?" asked Jesus.

And to the musicians and the mourners:

"Go away. The maid is not dead, but sleepeth."

And they laughed him to scorn. Jesus put them all out of the house, except the father and the mother and his disciples, Peter, James, and John. Then he entered the room of the young girl. And he took her by the hand, saying:

[1] Legend.

"Talitha cumi!" which is, being interpreted, "Damsel, arise!"

And straightway the spirit came back in her. She arose and began to dance, for she was only twelve years old, and great was her joy.

And Jesus withdrew with his friends after commanding that something should be given to the child to eat, and charging silence about what had been accomplished.

But the news of this miracle did not take long to spread throughout the city.

After that he went about Galilee, stopping in each city and village, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, healing the sick, and making the cripples to walk. His pity went out above all to the plain people, whom he called sheep without a shepherd. And thinking of all these wandering souls far from the house of God, he said to his disciples:

"The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest."

◆ THE MISSION OF THE APOSTLES ◆

The laborers, the husbandmen, Jesus chose them himself the day when he appointed twelve of his disciples to preach after him the Good News to the world. He gave them power and authority over unclean spirits, and the power to heal the sick and the lame. The hour had come to send them forth by two and two, to announce the Kingdom of God. He gathered them about him to teach them about their mission:

"Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any

city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.

"Say unto them, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

"Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils, raise the dead.

"Freely ye have received, freely give.

"Provide neither gold nor silver nor money of any sort in your purses. Take no scrip for your journey, neither two coats. Keep your sandals, put on no other shoes, do without staves: the workman is worthy of his meat.

"And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence.

"And when ye come into an house, salute it. Say, Peace be upon this house. If the house be worthy, peace will come upon it; if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you.

"If a city or a house shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake the dust off your feet. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city."

Again he said unto them:

"Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. Be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

"But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues.

"And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony of me, before them and before the nations.

"But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

"And, behold, the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child; and the children shall rise up against their parents and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But he that endureth to the end shall be saved."

In this way the Master foretold the martyrdom to come to his own and the struggles that were to arise among the people and even in families because of the new faith. But he did not require futile sacrifices.

"When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another."

And he affirmed:

"Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come."

Aware of his own destiny, submitting to it of his own will, he meant that his own should follow his example. For he said:

"It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. For the disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.

"If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub—that is, himself—how much more shall they call them of his household."

Now that the apostles knew about the tribulations in store for them, Jesus made every effort to comfort them by preaching faith in God.

"Fear them not," said he, "for there is nothing cov-

ered that shall not be revealed, and hid that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light. And what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.

"And fear not them which kill the body; they are not able to kill the soul. Fear, fear rather, him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. The very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore. Ye are of more value than many sparrows."

Was he not always to be with those who believed on him?

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in Heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven."

He stressed what he said about the struggles that would divide men even of the same blood, because of him. For it was important that the apostles be persuaded that nothing counted beside faith in him and in his Father. The salvation of the soul transcended all, even the earthly things that are nearest to our hearts. This is the suitable way to interpret these words:

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword.

"For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

"And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

"He that loveth father or mother more than me is

not worthy of me. He that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me.

"He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

He who saveth his mortal life through denial shall lose eternal life, and with him who shall suffer death because of his faith it shall be quite the contrary.

And thinking of those who shall be saved through his disciples, Jesus added:

"He that listens to you, listens to me; and he that scorns you, scorns me; and he that scorns me, scorns him that sent me.

"He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.

"He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. He that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward."

And pointing to a group of children, Jesus said:

"And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."

When Jesus had spoken, the apostles with these simple instructions set out two by two. They preached everywhere the Good News, they cast out demons, they anointed the sick with oil, and they healed many.

◈ THE DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST ◈

At this time the rumor of the death of John the Baptist was spreading in Galilee.

Twelve months before this, Herod Antipas took the Forerunner captive and held him in a fortress. John was not badly treated, his disciples had access to him, and the tetrarch often came to see him.

But Herodias, the adulterous wife of Antipas, feared him, for the accusing mouth of the prophet never ceased saying to Herod:

"It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife."

And Herodias wondered how she could purchase his silence. Shameless and beautiful, she attempted to seduce him. John, disgusted, repulsed the ambitious and corrupt woman. From that moment his doom was sealed.*

The opportunity Herodias needed in order to carry out her criminal intentions presented itself at last on the birthday of Herod.

The tetrarch loved to display his wealth. On that day, in the banqueting hall of the palace, where the walls were finished in marble, bronze, and mosaic, Herod gave a sumptuous feast to his lords, high captains, and chief notables of Galilee. To do honor to his guests and also to dazzle them, he fondled all the jewels he possessed before their eyes. And his robe, of woven silk and gold, gleamed with precious stones.

Countless black slaves served in vessels of silver and gold rare food that had come from Persia, India, Arabia, and Greece.

Now Herodias had a daughter, Salome, who was the most graceful princess ever seen. Her head was small, and her neck was round and high like a tower of ivory; her eyes were soft and tender like the eyes of doves; her lips were like a scarlet thread, and when they opened, as she smiled, upon her little white teeth one would have said: "Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even

shorn, which came up from the washing."[1] She was admired of all.

Herodias did not hesitate to make use of the grace of her child in order to disturb and awaken the sense of Antipas.

The feast was coming to a close; troops of young girls had come to sing and dance before Herod and his guests. It was then that Herodias sent Salome to take part in the entertainment.

The appearance of the young girl made a stir among the men, who had been eating and drinking for hours.

She danced. The light draperies which veiled the delicate outline of her body, brown as the tents of Kedar, beautiful as the pavilions of Solomon, balanced in harmonious rhythm, made her look like a palm tree bending under the winds of the desert.*

Disturbed and carried away by enthusiasm, Herod said to Salome:

"Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt and I will give it thee."

And he sware unto her: "Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom."

Salome said unto her mother, who was waiting anxiously in her apartment:

"What shall I ask?"

"The head of John the Baptist!" replied Herodias.

The young girl hastened to the banqueting hall.

"I will that thou give me in a charger the head of John the Baptist," she said to the tetrarch.

And the king was exceeding sorry; yet for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not

[1] Song of Songs.

reject her. And immediately the king called one of his guards and ordered him to bring John's head in a basin.

A few minutes later the guard came back from the prison with the head of the prophet. And he gave it to Salome.

And when the young girl brought her trophy, the mother manifested great joy.

There before her, silenced forever, was the mouth that had accused her. From those livid lips no more words could come. Arrogant and triumphant as she was, Herodias insulted the bleeding head of the Forerunner. Death had not disarmed hatred. In a frenzy she plunged needles into the swollen tongue of John.* Then she caused his body to be thrown into the moat of the fortress where it would be a prey to birds and wild beasts.

Thus ended the one who had been "a voice crying in the wilderness."

When night came his disciples secretly carried away his body and laid it in a tomb. And afterward they went to Jesus and told him all that had happened.

The death of John brought peace to Herodias, but it did not do as much for Herod. Seized with remorse, superstitious to the extreme, he lived in perpetual anxiety. When men talked to him of the miracles of Jesus he cried:

"It is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and that is why he is performing miracles."

Among those about him some swore that Elias had appeared; others said that one of the old prophets had come back to earth.

But this did not bring calm to Herod.

"John I have beheaded," said he, "but who is this of whom I hear marvelous things?"

And he desired to see Jesus in order to make sure that John had not come out of the tomb.

◆ THE MULTIPLICATION OF LOAVES ◆

Now the apostles, upon the return from their mission, came and told Jesus what they had done and what they had taught in his name. And immediately a great multitude followed him, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. Then Jesus said to them:

"Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest a while."

And they went into a ship. Crossing the lake, they went away to a desert place not far from the little city of Bethsaida Julias, in the tetrarchy of Philip.

There Jesus and his disciples were away from the authority of Herod, an authority which the Master had had to reckon with since the tragic end of John the Baptist.

But scarcely had they left the ship when the multitude pressed about them. The Jews of Galilee ran afoot along the shore. And the inhabitants of neighboring cities joined with them.

Then Jesus was moved with compassion before the multitude, for they were like sheep without a shepherd. He taught them and spake unto them of God. And he healed them that had need of healing.

Then he went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.

And the Passover, a great feast of the Jews, was nigh.

And when the day began to wear away the apostles said:

"Master, this is a desert place, and it is very late. Send away the people, that they may go into the villages and hamlets round about to find shelter and to buy themselves victuals."

"They need not depart," replied Jesus; "give ye them to eat."

"Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread?"

Jesus raised his eyes, and looking at the multitude he said to Philip:

"Whence shall we buy enough bread to feed them all?"

He was saying this to test the disciple. But he knew what was to be done.

But Philip replied:

"Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little."

"How many loaves have ye? Go and see."

Soon Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, came back and said:

"There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves and two fishes. But what are they among so many?"

"Are we to go and buy food for all the multitude?" asked the other disciples.

Smiling at seeing them in embarrassment, Jesus commanded them:

"Bring hither to me what ye have, and let the multitude sit down on the green grass."

All seated themselves in groups of one hundred and of fifty. And there were there about five thousand men, without counting the women and children.

Then Jesus took the five loaves and the two fishes; he looked up to Heaven and blessed and brake the loaves and gave them to his disciples to distribute among the people. And the two fishes divided he among them all.

And they did all eat and were filled.

And Jesus said to the disciples:

"Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost."

Now the disciples filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the loaves and the fishes which the people could not eat.

All those who saw this miracle were pointing to the Master, saying:

"Truly he is the prophet announced to the world."

For in the time when Balak was king of Moab, Balaam, son of Beor, set up seven altars, and upon each one he placed a calf and a sheep. And he said these words, which were put into his mouth by the Eternal:

"He hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the Most High, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes opened.

"I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh; there shall come a Star out of Jacob; and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the two regions of Moab, and shall destroy all the children of the tumult." [1]

And, filled with gratitude, the people wished to take Jesus by force, to carry him in triumph and to proclaim him king. But as he understood their purpose Jesus sent

[1] Numbers, xxiv.

his disciples into the ship and commanded them to go ahead of him to the other side of the lake.

Then when the evening was come he sent the multitudes away and he departed into a mountain to pray.

◈ JESUS WALKS UPON THE SEA ◈

And it was now dark and a great wind blew. On the water the disciples were struggling desperately against the fury of the waves. They were still very far from Capernaum, for they had gone scarcely twenty-five or thirty furlongs.

From the place where he was, the Master could see the danger to his friends. At the fourth watch, that is, about three o'clock in the morning, he decided to go to them. Walking upon the sea, he came near to the ship, as if he would have passed by them. It was then that the disciples saw him.

"It is a spirit!" they said, crying out in terror.

Jesus spoke to them:

"Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid."

"Lord, if it be thou," said Peter, "bid me come unto thee on the water."

And Jesus said:

"Come!"

Peter leaped from the ship. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried:

"Lord, save me!"

Jesus stretched forth his hand and caught him:

"O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

He helped Peter into the ship and then entered it himself. And then the wind ceased.

And that increased greatly the amazement of the dis-

ciples, which since the miracle of the loaves had been great. For they had not considered the miracle of the loaves, and their heart was blind. This time, they threw themselves at the feet of the Master, saying:

"Lord, of a truth, thou art the Son of God."

For they were remembering that Job had said of the Lord:

"He removeth the mountains, and they know not; which overturneth them in his anger.

"Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble.

"Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars.

"Which alone spreadeth out the heavens and treadeth upon the waves of the sea."

And now the ship was approaching the land of Gennesaret.

And when they were come out of the ship, straightway the people knew him, and they ran through that whole region round about proclaiming his return. And in every place where he was, in the hamlets, in the villages, or in the cities, they brought all that were diseased to the public square. And they besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment. And as many as touched were made perfectly whole.

◆ THE BREAD OF LIFE ◆

Now, on the next day, the people which stood on the other side of the sea sought Jesus in vain. How was it that he was not there? Nobody had seen him go away with his disciples.

Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread after that the Lord had given thanks. The Jews took shipping and came to Capernaum, seeking him. And when they had found him teaching in the synagogue they asked him:

"Master, when camest thou hither?"

"Verily, verily, I say unto you," Jesus answered them, "ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

"Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life. The Son of man shall give it unto you, for him hath God the Father sealed."

"What shall we do that we might work the works of God?"

"This is the work of God," said Jesus, "that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."

"What sign showest thou then that we may see and believe thee?"

The multiplication of the loaves was not enough of a sign for them.

"Our fathers did eat manna in the desert," they said; "as it is written, He gave them bread from Heaven to eat."

But Jesus answered them:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from Heaven. My Father giveth you the true bread from Heaven, for the bread of God is he which cometh down from Heaven, and giveth life unto the world."

"Lord, give us evermore this bread."

"I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall

never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

It was spiritual bread that Jesus was bringing to them, the bread of the soul, not the bread of the body that they expected from him. That is why he added sadly:

"I have told you, ye have seen me, and yet ye believe not."

And he said to them:

"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from Heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

"And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."

The Jews then murmured at him because of these words. They were surprised that he dared to say:

"I am the bread which came down from Heaven."

And like those who doubted him before at Nazareth, they murmured among themselves:

"We know his father and his mother. How is it then that he saith, I came down from Heaven?"

Without being shocked by their unbelief, Jesus answered them:

"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him. And I will raise him up at the last day."

Thus he affirmed the virtue of grace. He who received him not would remain in doubt.

"It is written in the prophets," he continued, "And they shall be all taught of God."

For in the time of Jotham, of Ahaz, of Hezekiah, kings of Judah, Micah the Morasthite had proclaimed, in the name of the Lord:

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains. It shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it.

"And many nations shall come and say, Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob. And he shall teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths." [1]

And Jesus said:

"He that hath heard the Father, and received his teaching, cometh unto me. But no man hath seen the Father but him who was born of God. He hath seen the Father.

"Verily, verily, he that believeth on me hath eternal life. I am the bread of life.

"Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from Heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

"I am the living bread which came down from Heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever. And the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

The Jews, whose minds were ensnared with material things, could not understand the real meaning of these words, and they did not hide their amazement:

[1] Micah, iv.

"How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" they said.

But Jesus continued:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him.

"As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

"This is that bread which came down from Heaven. Your fathers did eat manna, and are dead, but he that eateth of this bread shall live forever."

Jesus was enunciating the mystery of the Eucharist. Let those who believed on him understand. Let those who were touched by grace commune through him with God.

Several of his disciples were troubled. In their simplicity they imagined that they must literally feed themselves upon the body of the Master.

"This is a hard saying, and who can hear it?"

When Jesus knew in himself that they murmured at it, he said unto them:

"Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?"

This matter was to prove surprising likewise in other ways. But Jesus could anticipate events, while the disciples did not understand. He alone knew how he was to die. He alone knew of his resurrection and his ascension unto Heaven.

"It is the Spirit that quickeneth," Jesus said again; "the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life. But there are some of

you that believe not. Therefore said I unto you that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father."

For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

Now as they could not grasp what he had said, several of his disciples went back and walked no more with him. Nor did they go with him into the synagogues. They refused to listen to words which to them seemed monstrous and mad.

When they were some distance away from him, Jesus asked of the apostles:

"Will ye also go away?"

Simon Peter answered him:

"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

But Jesus was thinking of one who would betray him, and he answered sadly:

"Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?"

He meant Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.

◈ THE HYPOCRISY OF THE PHARISEES ◈

At that time, the scribes and Pharisees, who had come from Jerusalem to watch Jesus and to find him at fault before the law, or, rather, breaking the rigorous rules laid down by their kind, were offended when they saw the disciples of the Master eating with unwashed hands. According to the tradition that had come down from olden times, the Jews were obliged to make numerous ablutions.

Upon coming back from a public square they were not allowed to eat until they had carefully washed their arms up to the elbow. They took care likewise to wash the pots and the brazen vessels that were used at meals, as well as the woodwork of the couches upon which they reclined round about the table.

The Pharisees and the scribes asked Jesus why his disciples were not observing the tradition of the ancients. And to these sectarians he replied:

"Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? God said through Moses, Honor thy father and thy mother. And again, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death.

"Now ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or to his mother, That which I could give thee, that I promised unto God. And that one is blameless, although he honoreth neither his father nor his mother.

"Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.

"Ye hypocrites! Well did Esaias prophesy of you saying, This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

Then, addressing the people, he added:

"Hear and understand: not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh out of the mouth. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear."

And then he was entered into the house. And his disciples came to him and said:

"Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?"

He answered and said:

"Every plant which my Heavenly Father hath not

planted shall be rooted up. Let them alone! They be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."

But the disciples wanted him to explain to them the parable which had offended the scribes and the Pharisees, for, as usual, they had not understood. Simon Peter was their spokesman before the Master.

Although he understood the simplicity of their minds, Jesus was saddened.

"What!" said he, "are ye so without understanding? Do ye not perceive that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him? Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and is cast out into the draft?

"But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart, and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, and murders, thefts, avarice, wickedness, lasciviousness, and envious eyes, false witness, deceit, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. This is what defileth a man, and not eating with unwashed hands."

IV

THE MINISTRY—III

◈ THE WOMAN OF CANAAN ◈

Jesus knew that he was struggling with the hatred of the men of the Sanhedrim. Everywhere he went he met their spies.

The manner in which he had dealt publicly, and to their confusion, with the scribes and the Pharisees had not helped to disarm his enemies. He made up his mind to go away from Capernaum and Galilee. Accompanied by his apostles, he took refuge in the country of Tyre and Sidon, where he was to remain for almost six months. Although he made every effort to escape the attention of the authorities and of the inhabitants of the country themselves, it was not long before they were speaking his name. Some who had seen him in Galilee recognized him.

Now a woman whose daughter had an unclean spirit had heard of him, and she came and fell at his feet:

"O Lord, thou Son of David, have mercy on me. My daughter is grievously vexed with a devil."

This was a woman of Canaan, called Justa,* a Greek of the Phenician provinces of Syria. Her daughter was named Berenice.* To Jesus, Justa was a heretic. He answered her not a word.

She appealed to the apostles, weeping, beating her breast, humbling herself by touching her face to the dust.

Wearied by her pleading, the apostles besought the Master to attend to her demand and to send her away. But Jesus said:

"I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel."

The woman did not cease to implore him:

"Lord! Lord! help me!"

"Let the children first be filled. It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it unto the dogs."

Before giving care to the pagans he ought to look after the sons of Israel. It was to them, to the children of the people of God, that he brought the divine manna, the Good News, the spiritual bread. The woman of Canaan, was she able to get the real meaning of the words of the Master? Probably not. And it meant little to her to be classed with the dogs; she thought only of obtaining the cure for her daughter.

"Yes, Lord," said she, "that is true. Yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs."

Touched by such humility, and admiring the strength of the mother love in her heart, Jesus said gently:

"O woman, great is thy faith. Be it unto thee even as thou wilt. For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter."

The woman ran to her house. And, behold, her daughter was laid upon the bed, for she had been delivered of the unclean spirit.

◈ THE SECOND MULTIPLICATION OF LOAVES ◈

Jesus departed from the country of Tyre and came back, through Sidon, unto the sea of Galilee, crossing the

midst of the coasts of Decapolis, inhabited by Greeks. There again he was recognized. And they brought unto him one that was deaf and had an impediment in his speech. And they besought him to put his hand upon him.

Jesus did not wish to do anything publicly which could attract to him the attention of those who wished his downfall. Therefore he took the man aside. He put his fingers into his ears, and he spit and touched his tongue. Then looking up to Heaven, he sighed and said, "Ephphatha," and this means, "Be opened."

And straightway the ears of the deaf man were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

The Master charged them that they should tell no man. But the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it.

"He hath done all things well. He maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak!" they cried, filled with admiration.

From everywhere they came to see him. Then he departed to a high desert place. And great multitudes came unto him. Those that were lame, blind, dumb, and many that were maimed were brought to him. And he healed them; insomuch that the multitude wondered and glorified God, when they saw the dumb to speak, the lame to walk, the blind to see. And they glorified the God of Israel.

And as all these people had nothing to eat and Jesus did not wish to send them away hungry to their homes which were far away, he multiplied seven loaves and a few fishes which the disciples had brought.

And they did eat and were filled. And they took up seven baskets of fragments.

Now there were there four thousand men besides women and children.

And when they were on their way toward their homes, Jesus and his friends came to the sea of Galilee. And when they had found a ship they went away to the opposite shore.

What did the Master intend to do? Did he want to go into the solitude of Zebulon, or would he stay in the parts of Dalmanutha, a small settlement south of Magdala? One thing was certain, and that was that the moment his foot touched the shore the whole country knew that he had come.

Immediately the Pharisees and the Sadducees, men in the pay of Herod, gathered around him. It was concerted action. They made every effort to make him say words or accomplish acts that would compromise him in the eyes of the authorities and of the tetrarch himself. They discussed his ideas and pretended not to be able to decipher his parables. And first of all they demanded a miracle from Heaven which should bear witness to the divine mission of the Master.

Jesus penetrated to their wicked thought.

"When it is evening," said he, "ye say, It will be fair weather, for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to-day, for the sky is red and lowering. When ye see a cloud in the west ye say, It is going to rain. And, in truth, it does rain. The wind blows from the south, and you say, We shall have warm weather. And it comes.

"O ye hypocrites! Ye know what is foretold by the sky and the earth. How is it that ye cannot discern the signs of the times?"

And what are they really doing? They cover their eyes in order not to see; they stop their ears in order not to hear. They deny that the prophets announced his coming. They refuse to believe the miracles that he accomplishes.

"And why," said Jesus, "does this race seek after a sign? Verily I say unto you, this wicked and adulterous generation shall have no sign given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas."

◈ THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES ◈
◈ HEALING A BLIND MAN ◈

And when he had spoken in this way, entering into a ship with his disciples, Jesus departed to the other side of the lake.

They were far from the shore when the disciples realized that there remained only one loaf of bread, for they had forgotten to provide food.

Now Jesus, thinking of the perfidy of his enemies, said unto them:

"Take heed; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees."

The apostles believed that he wanted to console them because they had no bread. But the Master said unto them:

"Men of little faith, what do ye seek? Perceive ye not yet, neither understand? Have ye your hearts yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? Having ears, hear ye not?

And do ye not remember? When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up?"

"Twelve."

"And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up?"

"Seven."

"How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?"

For if he fed the multitude, could he not feed them also?

And the apostles understood how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

◈ THOU ART PETER ◈

Jesus and his apostles had reached Bethsaida Julias, going up to Jordan. The Master restored sight to a blind man, and then he continued toward Cæsarea Philippi.

As they were in the way he asked his disciples:

"What are they saying about the Son of man? Whom do men say that I am?"

"Some say that thou art John the Baptist, others that thou art Elias, others still that thou art Jeremias, or one of the old prophets, risen again."

Always the same blindness! Jesus sorrowed in his heart. But overcoming that, he asked his disciples:

"But whom say ye that I am?"

And Simon Peter answered and said:

"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

And Jesus answered and said unto Peter:

"Blessed art thou, Simon, Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven."

It was not through reason that Peter had a revelation of the truth: he was touched by Grace!

"And I say unto thee," continued Jesus, "thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of hell—that is to say, the infernal powers—shall not prevail against it.

"I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven."

Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was the Christ.

Then he began to teach them about his glorious end, for he knew all that was to happen to him. He told them how he must go up to Jerusalem, and of the persecutions that he must suffer at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes. He said that he must be ejected and put to death and that he should be raised up again after three days.

Painfully affected by these revelations, the apostles kept silence. More than once the Master had made allusions to these things, but never in such a definite manner. But Peter began to rebuke him.

"Be it far from thee, Lord! This shall not be unto thee!"

They could not admit that Jesus who was the Christ should submit to death at the hands of his enemies.

Peter judged the situation in his own limited way. He

had no conception of the grandeur of the sacrifice accepted by the Son of man.

Jesus said to him heatedly:

"Get thee behind me, Satan! Thou art an offense unto me, for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

And he called all the disciples and the people who had come to see him, in order to speak unto them.

"Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

"Whosoever will save his life here below, shall lose it in the Kingdom of Heaven; whosoever shall lose it, for love of me and the Gospel, shall gain eternal life.

"What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels, to reward each one according to his works. For verily I say unto you, there be some of you which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the Kingdom of God come with power."

◈ THE TRANSFIGURATION ◈

And it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that he took Peter and John and James and went up into a mountain to pray. It was in the evening.

And he was transfigured in their presence.

He was praying. His soul and his thoughts were rising toward God. A divine light was in his flesh. His spirit

lost itself in his Heavenly Father. And his pale and beautiful face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light, so as no fuller on earth can white them.

Now Peter, James, and John, overcome with fatigue, were sleeping. When they awakened they saw two men who appeared in glory, standing before the Master. They were Moses and Elias, who were speaking with Jesus about his approaching death in Jerusalem.

Then Peter, troubled and stammering, not knowing what he was saying, spoke to the Master:

"Lord, it is good for us to be here. If thou wilt, let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias."

While Peter was yet speaking, there came a luminous cloud from Heaven which was about Jesus and the prophets. And a voice, coming from the cloud, said:

"This is my beloved Son. In him I am well pleased. Hear ye him!"

Sore afraid, the apostles fell on their faces. But Jesus came and touched them and said unto them:

"Arise! Be not afraid!"

When Peter, James, and John arose, Jesus was alone. Moses and Elias had effaced themselves before him whom the Lord proclaimed to be his beloved Son. The law and the prophets were incarnated in the supreme way, in the glorious person of Christ.*

When Jesus had come down from the mountain the sun was showing its early rays upon the horizon. The apostles were silent as they walked. They were still under the spell of the surprising things that they had witnessed. The Master said unto them:

"Tell no man what things ye have seen, till the Son of man be risen from the dead."

Peter, James, and John kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what it should mean; how could the Master rise from the dead? They asked the Master timidly:

"Why say the scribes and the Pharisees that Elias must first come?"

Jesus made them this answer:

"Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things and be set at nought. But I say unto you that Elias is already come. They knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them."

Then the disciples understood that Jesus was alluding to John the Baptist, the one who had suffered death because he cried in the wilderness:

"Repent ye! Prepare the way of the Lord, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!"

At the foot of the mountain, Jesus, Peter, James, and John found the other disciples surrounded by a great multitude. They were disputing with the Pharisees and the scribes.

Jesus was troubled. What were his friends doing there, in the midst of his enemies?

The people, amazed to see him, made way for him and saluted him with respect.

"What question ye with them?" demanded the Master of the scribes.

But a man came out of the crowd and cried:

"Master, I have brought unto thee my only son, who

is a lunatic. A dumb spirit vexeth him in his flesh. He falleth to the ground and is bruised. He foameth at the mouth and gnasheth with his teeth. And the child pineth away.

"I spake to thy disciples that they should cast out this demon, and they could not."

Jesus raised the man to his feet. Then he said to the people.

"O faithless and perverse generation!" said he. "How long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you?"

He commanded the father to bring hither his son.

And as he was yet a-coming, the devil threw him down and tare him.

"How long is it ago since this came unto him?" asked Jesus.

"Since childhood. Oftentimes the spirit hath cast him into the fire and into the waters, to destroy him. But if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us!"

"If thou canst believe!" said Jesus. "All things are possible to him that believeth!"

And straightway the father said with tears:

"Lord, I believe! Help thou mine unbelief; help my belief!"

Before the thronging crowds, Jesus rebuked the foul spirit:

"Thou deaf and dumb spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him!"

At these words the spirit cried and came out of the child, who fell to the earth shaken with a supreme convulsion.

"He is dead!" murmured the people.

But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up, and gave him to his father.

And all wondered at the power of God.

The Master had come into a house, and the disciples sought him and asked:

"Why could we not cast out this demon?"

Jesus answered them:

"The reason is your own unbelief. Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove. Nothing shall be impossible unto you. But to cast out an unclean spirit one must be purified one's self, by prayer and fasting."

When they departed thence, secretly they crossed Galilee in order to go back to Capernaum.

On the way, Jesus taught his disciples. He was not to stay always with them, and so he made every effort to equip them to carry to the world the Good News, after him.

"For," said he, "the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men. They shall kill him. He shall rise the third day."

Upon the mountain, Peter, James, and John had not understood these words; no more now did the disciples understand them.

When they were come to Capernaum, those who collected the tax that every Jew, according to the law of Moses, should pay for the remission of sins and the maintenance of the Temple, approached Peter and asked him:

"Doth not your Master pay the two drachmas?"

"He pays," replied Peter, who rejoined Jesus as quickly as possible.

When he saw him the Master said:

"What thinkest thou, Simon? Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? Of their own children, or of strangers?"

"Of strangers."

"Then are the children free? Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast a hook. Take up the fish that first cometh up, and when thou hast opened his mouth thou shalt find a piece of money: give unto them for me and thee."

Thus the Son of man submitted to being classed as a stranger, in the ranks of those who paid a tithe for their sins. He yielded to the common law. but he manifested his power with a miracle.

◈ THE FIRST SHALL BE LAST ◈

When the disciples had gathered in the house where he was resting, Jesus asked them:

"What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?"

The subject of their discussion was known to him. They were reasoning upon which one among them should be greatest. Jesus wanted to put them to confusion.

Without giving a direct answer to his question, and after a space of silence, the disciples ended by saying:

"Master, who will be the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?'

Jesus sat down, called the twelve about him, and said unto them:

"If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and the servant of all!"

Then to illustrate the lesson in humility, he took a little child and set him in the midst of them, and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them:

"Verily I say unto you, except ye change your ways and become as little children ye shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child" (he that becometh simple and pure like this little one), "the same shall be greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. Thus he who among you shall be least, it is he that shall be greatest.

"Whosoever shall receive one of these little ones in my name, receiveth me. And whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me."

And then spake John:

"Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; we forbade him because he followeth not with us."

The disciples had not understood the lesson Jesus taught them. They were obstinate in arrogance. After disputing as to which one among them was to hold first place, they further contended for the right to be the only persons to practise healing in the name of the Master.

With his usual wisdom Jesus answered John:

"Forbid no man to heal the sick in my name; for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name that can lightly speak evil of me.

"He that is not against us, is for us."

And again:

"For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward."

Confessing him was enough to win the Kingdom of Heaven.

"But," continued Jesus, "whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me" (those who possess humility and have the simplicity and the purity of children), "it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he were cast into the sea.

"Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you that in Heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in Heaven."

And Jesus spake again in these words:

"Woe unto the world because of offenses! For it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh!"

All offense leads to sin; all sin is offense to God.

"If thy hand offend thee," said Jesus, "cut it off and cast it far from thee! It is better to enter eternal life with only one hand than to have two hands and go into hell fire where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.

"And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off and cast it far from thee. It is better to have only one foot and enter eternal life than to have two feet and go into hell fire where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.

"And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it far from thee. It is better to have only one eye and enter into the Kingdom of God than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell fire where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.

"For every one shall be salted with fire—that is, purified—and every oblation, every sacrifice, shall be salted with salt.

"Salt is good. But if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it, how shall sin be purified?

"Have salt in yourselves and have peace one with another!"

◈ FORGIVENESS ◈

As he put away offense, desiring for his friends the candid purity of children, so Jesus wished his disciples and all men to obey the great law of fraternity and love that he came to establish on earth.

He had charged his apostles that they should have humility. He was about to give them a supreme lesson in kindness and justice—kindness determining all justice.

"If thy brother shall trespass against thee, if he shall offend thee," said he, "go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee and repent, forgive him: thou hast gained thy brother. If he shall offend thee seven times in one day, and if he say unto thee seven times, I repent, forgive him.

"But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or more persons, so that his offense shall be certified by two or three witnesses."

Here Jesus was judging according to the law of Moses; he further wished that the Church should intervene with all authority. He said:

"If he remain deaf to the voice of those present, call him before the tribunal of the Church. And if he also refuse to recognize the Church, scorn him, as thou wouldst scorn a pagan and a publican.

"Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven.

"Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

God is present everywhere that men are united in love.

Peter, always slow to seize the meaning of the words of his master, asked:

"Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?"

"I say not unto thee, until seven times," Jesus answered him, "but until seventy times seven."

That means forever!

But let him be anathema who, having been pardoned himself, shows himself to be unforgiving toward others. And Jesus likened the Kingdom of Heaven unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

And when he had begun to reckon, a high functionary who owed ten thousand talents to the treasury was brought before him. Now he had nothing with which to pay. The king commanded him to be sold, and his wife and his children, and all that he had, and that the debt be paid.

The man, falling to the ground, embraced the knees of the king and begged for pity.

"Lord," he groaned, "have patience with me, and I will pay thee all."

Moved with compassion, the king loosed him and forgave him the debt.

Now when he had left the palace, this man met one of his fellow servants which owed him an hundred pence, which was like a grain of mustard in a thousand measures of wheat, compared with what he owed himself.

"Pay me that thou owest!" he cried, taking the unfortunate man by the throat.

"Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all," besought the poor fellow, falling at the feet of his master.

But the master, deaf to his pleading, had him seized and cast into prison.

Outraged by this treatment, the other fellow servants of this brutal chief went and told the king what was done. And he had his servant brought before him.

"Wicked man," he said unto him, "touched by thy pleading, I forgive thy debt. How is it that thou didst not have compassion on thy debtor as I had upon thee?"

And he delivered him to the sergeants, who tormented him until he should pay all that was due unto the king.

"So likewise shall my Heavenly Father do also unto you," concluded Jesus, "if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

◈ THE FEAST OF THE TABERNACLES ◈

It was the month of September. For the Jews the Feast of the Tabernacles was approaching.

When he was giving his commands to Moses, the Eternal said these words to his servant:

"Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall be the Feast of the Tabernacles, during seven days in honor of the Eternal.

"When ye have reaped the harvest of wheat, gathered in the grapes and the olives, ye shall make a feast before the Lord, for seven days.

"The first, there shall be an holy convocation and ye shall do no servile work. It shall be a day of rest. And the eighth day shall likewise be for rest.

"The first day ye shall take the fruit of goodly trees, peach trees and lemon trees, branches of palm trees, branches of olive trees and pines and willows of the rivers. And ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days.

"Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths, in booths made of branches, that your posterity may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt. For I am the Lord your God.

"For seven days ye shall make burnt offerings, of a sweet savor unto the Lord. Ye shall offer, in a sacrifice with fire, thirteen young bullocks, two rams, and fourteen yearling lambs without blemish. Ye shall add an offering of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals unto every bullock, two tenth deals to each ram, one tenth deal to each of the fourteen lambs;

"And one kid of the goats for a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering, without forgetting the offering of fine flour and wine.

"And on the second day ye shall offer twelve young bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the first year without spot, with oblations of fine flour and wine, according to what is prescribed, for each one of the bullocks, the rams, and the lambs.

"Ye shall offer also one goat for a sin offering, be-

side the continual burnt offering, without omitting the offering of fine flour and wine.

"And on the third day ye shall offer eleven bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish, with oblations of fine flour and wine, according to what is prescribed, for each of the bullocks, the rams, and the lambs.

"Ye shall offer also one goat for a sin offering, beside the continual burnt offering, without omitting the offering of fine flour and wine.

"And on the fourth day ye shall offer ten bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish, with the oblations of flour and wine, according to what is prescribed, for each one of the bullocks, the rams, and the lambs.

"Ye shall offer also one kid of the goats for a sin offering, beside the continual burnt offering, without omitting the offering of fine flour and wine.

"And on the fifth day ye shall offer nine bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without spot, with the oblations of fine flour and wine, according to what is prescribed, for each one of the bullocks, the rams, and the lambs.

"Ye shall offer one goat for a sin offering, beside the continual burnt offering, without omitting the offering of fine flour and wine.

"And on the sixth day ye shall offer eight bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year, without blemish, with oblations of fine flour and wine, according to what is prescribed, for each of the bullocks, the rams, and the lambs.

"Ye shall offer also one goat for a sin offering, beside

the continual burnt offering, without omitting the offering of fine flour and wine.

"And on the seventh day ye shall offer seven bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year, without blemish, with oblations of fine flour and wine, according to what is prescribed, for each of the bullocks, the rams, and the lambs.

"Ye shall offer also one goat for a sin offering, beside the continual burnt offering, without omitting the offering of fine flour and wine.

"The eighth day ye shall have a solemn assembly, and ye shall do no servile work therein. And ye shall offer a burnt offering, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord, one bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year, without blemish, with oblations of fine flour and wine, according to what is prescribed, for the bullock, the ram, and the lambs.

"Ye shall offer also one goat for a sin offering, beside the continual burnt offering, without omitting the offering of fine flour and wine.

"These are the sacrifices that ye shall offer through fire to the Eternal, as well as the oblations and the libations for each day."[1]

Now with the Feast of the Tabernacles the time was approaching when Jesus should be taken away from the world. Those whom men called his brothers—with the exception of James and Jude, who were among his disciples—came to find him in order to urge him to go up to Jerusalem. They wanted him to manifest publicly his power through miracles.

[1] Leviticus, xxiii; Numbers, xxix.

"Depart hence, go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. When a man wishes to win the people he doth not act in secret. Since thou doest surprising and marvelous things, come out of thy retreat and show thyself publicly."

These words were not without irony, for the brothers of Jesus were jealous of him and spoke with derision. How could they have believed in him? They considered him insane! Jesus did not follow their counsel.

"My time is not yet come," he said unto them, "but your time is always ready. The world doth not hate you, but me it hateth because I testify of it that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast. As for me, the time is not yet come for me to go up to Jerusalem."

The implacable hatred with which the Pharisees and those who served in the Temple pursued him was known to Jesus, and Jesus did not wish to let them know anything about his plans. But he had made up his mind to go to the Feast of the Tabernacles. He waited for the departure of his brothers, allowed the caravans to pass by, and then went his way. Several of his disciples went before him. When he would arrive in a village all would be ready for his food and his rest.

Now in a village of Samaria, James and John found no hospitality for their master. The Samaritans did not join in the feasts of the Jews; they also refused to receive any one who was on his way to the holy city.

In their indignation James and John wished to take vengeance upon the inhabitants of the village.

"Lord," they said unto the Master, "wilt thou that we command fire to come down from Heaven to consume

them, as when upon the demand of Elias the Teshbite it twice consumed the chiefs and the soldiers of the king of Samaria who scorned the God of Israel?"

But Jesus rebuked them for this evil thought:

"Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

And they continued their way and avoided drawing upon them the attention of the Samaritans.

◈ JESUS GOES UP TO THE TEMPLE ◈

In Jerusalem the Feast of the Tabernacles proceeded according to the customary rites.

And the chiefs among the Jews were astonished that they did not see Jesus. Where was he? They both feared and wished for his coming. They feared his arrival because of his influence upon the masses; they wished for it because they hoped for the opportunity to detect him in an offense against the law which would permit them to take measures against him.

Among the people his absence gave rise to heated discussions. Those who had been moved by his words took up his defense.

"He is a good man," they said.

Others replied:

"Nay, but he deceiveth the people."

These opinions were exchanged in secret, far from the scribes and the doctors whose hatred for the Master was known. And then people were afraid of becoming the object of suspicion if they took an interest in the actions of Jesus.

Now when the feast was half over, Jesus went up to the Temple, to the amazement of all. As he had already done before, he began to teach.

The scribes mingled with the people in order to listen to him, and they were astonished by his wisdom and his knowledge.

"How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"

For them, only those whom they had instructed knew the word of the prophets and the precepts of the law.

When he learned of their astonishment, Jesus said with humility:

"My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

"If any man will do the will of him who sent me—if he confess his faith—it will be easy for him to recognize whether my doctrine is of God or whether I speak in my name.

"He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh his glory that sent him is worthy of faith; there is no injustice or lying in him."

How would the scribes and the priests have recognized the will of God?

"Did not Moses give you the law?" said Jesus; "and yet none of you keepeth the law."

"Thou shalt not kill," commanded Moses.

"Why, then," demanded Jesus, "go ye about to kill me?"

The Jews protested:

"Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee?"

Then he answered them:

"I have done good works on the Sabbath day, and ye were offended. What do you do then yourselves? Following the command of the Eternal to Abraham,

Moses commanded you to circumcise every male child upon the eighth day after his birth. Now you circumcise even if the eighth day is the Sabbath.

"If ye circumcise on the Sabbath day, that the law of Moses should not be broken, are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath day?"

When he said that, Jesus was thinking of the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda, to whom he said, "Arise and walk," and he rose and he walked.

He added:

"Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment."

Which was more just: to observe the law or to cure a man of his malady? To Jesus, pity, charity, was always more important. No law could transcend the law of love which he was bringing to the world.

Jesus continued to teach publicly, and this greatly astonished the Jews, who knew to what extent the ideas of the Master appeared to the learned men of the Temple to be subversive. And they said among themselves:

"Is not this he whom they seek to put to death? How is it then that the scribes and the priests allow him to speak? Do they really take him for the Christ?"

This seemed to them all the more surprising because they had thought that the Christ was to appear in a mysterious way.

In the first year of the reign of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, the prophet Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed. And this is what he tells:

"I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, one like the

Son of man came with the clouds of Heaven and came to the Ancient of days, and the Eternal gave him dominion and glory and the kingdom. And all people, all nations and languages, bowed before him.

"His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall never be destroyed; it shall be eternal."[1]

Remembering this prophecy, the Jews cried as they pointed to Jesus:

"We know this man whence he is; but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is."

They were blinded by the humble birth of the Master. The marvel of this birth they had not perceived.

To those who were discussing his origin, Jesus said:

"Verily ye know me! Verily ye know whence I am! Learn that I am not come of myself." (That is, "I was not born like other men!") "Ye know not him that sent me; nevertheless he is. But I know him, for I am from him; and he hath sent me."

These words exasperated his enemies who sought to take him in order to bring him before the tribunal of the Sanhedrim. But no man laid hands on him. His hour was not yet come.

Several Jews, however, spoke in his favor.

"When Christ cometh," they said, "will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?"

These sayings were carried to the Pharisees who were conferring with the chief priests. The speeches of the Master were stirring up the people. The need had become urgent to put a stop to his teaching. Therefore it was decided that soldiers should be sent to take him.

[1] Daniel, vii.

Nevertheless Jesus continued to speak to the multitudes under the porticoes.

"Yet a little while am I with you," he said, "and then I go unto him that sent me. Ye shall seek me and shall not find me; and where I am, thither ye cannot come."

As usual the Jews were not penetrating to the real meaning of the words of Jesus. And they asked among themselves:

"Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? Will he go unto the children of Israel who are dispersed among the Greeks? Will he preach to them? What is the meaning of the words: Ye shall seek me and shall not find me; and where I am, thither ye cannot come?"

Every day during the Feast of the Tabernacles the officiating priest went to get water in a golden vessel, from the fountain of Siloam. Upon his return he was received in the Temple with bugle calls and songs. Going up to the altar he poured the water from the fountain into a silver vessel and filled a golden vessel with wine. Then the people intoned chants to the glory of the Eternal.*

"When Israel went out of Egypt, the House of Jacob from a people of strange language,

"Judah was the sanctuary of God, Israel his dominion.

"The sea saw it, and fled; the Jordan was driven back.

"The mountains skipped like rams and little hills like lambs.

"What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? Thou Jordan that thou wast driven back?

"Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams; and ye little hills, like lambs?

"Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob,

"Which turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters. Praise ye the Lord!" [1]

Now the last day of the Feast of the Tabernacles, which is the most solemn of all, Jesus, standing in the midst of the people, took advantage of the fact that the priest was performing the sacred rite, symbol of the union of Moses with the Lord, to confess his Father and affirm the mystical and spiritual meaning of his mission.

"Ho, every one that thirsteth," sang Isaiah, "come ye to the waters, draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation." [2]

And Jesus said:

"If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink! He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

Jesus spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive. But the Holy Ghost was not yet given; he had not yet purified souls, because the Son of man was not yet glorified: he had not yet ascended into Heaven.

Some of the crowd cried out:

"Of a truth this is the prophet announced to Moses by the Lord! This is the Christ!"

[1] Psalms, cxiv.
[2] Isaiah, lv.

Others:

"Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the Scripture said that he should be of the House of David and out of the town of Bethlehem where David was born?"

So there was a division among the people because of him.

The armed men sent to take him were so troubled that they did not dare to lay hands on him.

The priests and the Pharisees demanded of them:

"Why have ye not brought him?"

They answered:

"Never man spake like this man."

"What!" cried the Pharisees, "are ye also deceived? Are there those among you who believe on him? Only this wretched multitude, those who know not the law, believe on him."

Nicodemus, who was there, could not withhold a protest. Since the night when he went to speak with Jesus, a profound unrest reigned in his soul.

"Doth our law judge any man," said he, "before it hear him and know what he doeth?"

Surprised and enraged at his intervention, the priests and the Pharisees replied:

"Art thou also of Galilee? Search and look in the Scriptures, for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet."

Whereupon every man went away into his own house.

◈ THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY ◈

The crowds at Jerusalem during the feasts were so great that many pilgrims found no place to stay in the city. They scattered into the villages round about or set up tents in open spaces near the city.

Jesus and his disciples had established their camp upon the Mount of Olives, which dominates the valley of the Cedron, opposite Zion.

Here, in simplicity and poverty, a handful of men were bringing to the world a new moral code, a new faith; there, in its splendor, was displayed an arrogant civilization which was too confident of its own strength. On the one hand, all power, all wealth, all authority; on the other, all humility, all poverty, all love.*

Early in the morning of the day after the close of the Feast of the Tabernacles, Jesus came down from the Mount of Olives and came again into the Temple. Immediately the crowd encircled him. He sat down and began to teach them.

Now the scribes and the Pharisees brought unto him a woman who was still young and beautiful. She was hiding her face in fear and shame.

"Master," they said, "this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned. What sayest thou?"

The scribes and the Pharisees did not realize that the law of Moses was falling into desuetude upon this point, as upon many others. The outraged husband could ask for a divorce. But bent upon tricking him, they hoped that Jesus would make them an answer that would compromise him.

He said nothing, however. He was occupied in tracing with his finger mysterious signs in the dust; he appeared not to have heard the question of the scribes and the Pharisees. They insisted upon an answer. They must have the opinion of the Master.

Then he raised himself up and said unto them:

"He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."

Then again he began to trace signs in the dust with his finger.

And now, smitten in their own conscience, they went out one by one, beginning with the eldest.

When no one was there any longer, excepting the sinning woman, Jesus asked her:

"Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?"

"No man, Lord," answered the woman.

"Neither do I condemn thee," continued Jesus; "go! and sin no more."

And the woman went away, carrying in her soul the perfume of divine pity.

◈ I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD ◈

Each time he had the opportunity Jesus did not fail to contrast his doctrine and that of the Jews: he announced the reign of the Spirit as opposed to the reign of material things.

There was in the Temple a part reserved for the women. They called this court the Treasury, because the coffers where the offerings were locked up were placed there. Two enormous candelabra made of gold, and fifty cubits in height, there held aloft their branches. And upon them, on feast nights, there were lighted symbolic fires which the people could see in all the city.*

Jesus came into this court. On the tops of the candelabra, the fire, which for him summed up the image of life which perishes, was extinguished. Straightway he said to the people who were following him:

"I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life eternal."

The Pharisees sneered:

"Thou bearest record of thyself. Thy record is not true."

"Though I bear record of myself," Jesus answered them, "yet my record is true. For I know whence I came. Now ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.

"Ye judge after the flesh. I judge no man. And if I judge, my judgment is true, for I am not alone: the Father that sent me is with me.

"It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me."

"Where is thy father?" demanded the Pharisees.

"Ye neither know me nor my Father," Jesus answered. "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also."

And again he said to these men of little faith.

"I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins; whither I go, ye cannot come."

What did this mean? Was the Master thinking to kill himself, they asked themselves.

"Ye are from beneath; I am from above," continued Jesus. "Ye are of this world. That is why I said unto you that ye shall die in your sins. Since ye see not who it is that I am, since ye believe not in me, I say unto you, ye shall die in your sins."

"Who art thou?"

"Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning."

And again:

"I have many things to say and to judge of you. But he that sent me is true. I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.

"When ye have lifted up the Son of man" (when ye have placed him upon the cross), "then ye shall know who I am and that I do nothing of myself, but as my Father hath taught me I speak these things.

"Verily he that sent me is with me. The Father hath not left me alone, for I do always those things that please him."

But they that were listening to him—as they were not listening with their hearts—did not understand the meaning of his words. They knew not that in speaking of his Father Jesus was talking of God.

There was, however, such great firmness and at the same time such gentleness in the words of the Master that several Jews were moved to believe on him. It was to them that he said:

"If ye continue in my word, faithful to my teaching, then ye are my disciples indeed. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

But they answered him with arrogance, forgetting the captivity of Israel in Egypt:

"We be Abraham's seed. We were never in bondage to any man. How sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?"

Between them and Jesus it was always the same misunderstanding: he never ceased to tell them about the Kingdom of Heaven; they never ceased to think of the kingdom of the earth. Alas! it was not to be long before they would give new proofs of their stupidity.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you," replied Jesus, "who-

soever committeth sin is the servant of sin. Now the servant abideth not in the house forever (he cannot know the whole will of the Master); the son abideth ever in the house (he yields to the order of his father). If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

He that believeth on Jesus is in the truth, his sins are forgiven, and he is delivered from sin.

"I know that ye are Abraham's seed. But ye seek to kill me, because my words have no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father; and ye do that which ye have seen with your father."

"Abraham is our father," protested the Jews once more.

"If ye were Abraham's children," continued Jesus, "ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me. I have told you the truth which I have heard of God, and ye wish to kill me. This is not at all the way of Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father."

Though of the race of Abraham, not all were his children. According to Jesus, it was not enough to be descended from the patriarch through the flesh; they must be descended from him through the spirit. These Jews were like those of whom the Eternal had said to Moses, that they would abandon their covenant to waste themselves before strange gods. Their real father was not Abraham, who was subject to the Eternal; it was Israel, of whom Isaiah the prophet speaks in these terms, in the name of the Eternal:

"I have nourished and brought up children, but they have rebelled against my law.

"The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's

crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

"Ah! sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters! They have forsaken the Lord. They have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger; they are gone away backward.

"To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord. I am full of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts. And I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.

"Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.

"And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you, yea, when ye make many prayers I will not hear, for your hands are full of blood."[1]

Now the Jews continued always to sprinkle the altar of the Lord with blood; rivers of blood flowed in the Temple. But they did not wish any one to accuse them of having sold themselves to strange gods. Those whom Jesus was addressing protested vehemently that they were pure in heart.

"We be not born of fornication" (children of prostitution!). "We have one Father, even God!"

Jesus answered them:

"If God were your father, ye would love me, because I was born of God, and because I was sent of him, for in coming to you it was not of my will: I do the will of my Father.

[1] Isaiah, i.

"Why do ye not understand my speech? But how could ye hear me? Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning. He abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar, and the father of it.

"I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.

"Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?

"He that is of God heareth God's words; ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God."

The anger of the Jews, when they were repudiated in this way, was extreme. They hurled invectives at Jesus, called him a Samaritan—that is, impious, a sectarian—and accused him of being possessed of a devil.

Jesus answered them:

"I have not a devil. I honor my father, and ye do dishonor me. And I seek not mine own glory; there is one that seeketh and judgeth.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying he shall never see death."

The Jews cried out at this blasphemy, for in their stupidity they continued to be blind and deaf, and did not understand at all that the Master was speaking of Heavenly life.

"Now we know," they said, "that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying he shall never taste of death! Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead, and the prophets, which are dead? Whom makest thou thyself?"

And Jesus said:

"If I honor myself, my honor is nothing. It is my

Father that honoreth me, of whom ye say that he is your God. Yet have ye not known him. But I know him. If I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you. But I know him and keep his saying. I do not contradict myself.

"Abraham, whom you call your father, rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad."

"What!" protested the Jews, "thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?"

The Eternal had said unto Moses:

"I am that I am." [1]

Jesus answered:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am!" At these words with which Jesus affirmed his union with God, the Jews took up stones to cast at him. His disciples intervened, and he hid himself and went out of the Temple.

◈ THE MAN BORN BLIND ◈

Now as he was descending from one level to another in a little street a man was asking charity. Blind from his birth, the man could only leave his running and festering eyes exposed to the dust and to the flies.

"Master," inquired his disciples, "why was this man born blind? Who did sin, this man, or his father, or his mother?"

For the Eternal had said unto Moses:

"I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and the fourth generation of them that hate me." [2]

[1] Exodus, iii.
[2] Exodus, xx.

Then Jesus answered his disciples:

"Neither this man sinned nor his father or mother; if he is blind, it is that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work."

Now with Jesus it was still day, and his night was approaching. That is why he added:

"As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed the eyes of the blind man. And he said unto him:

"Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is, by interpretation, Sent).

The blind man went his way therefore and washed, and came seeing. And the people questioned among themselves:

"Is not this he that sat and begged?"

"This is he," answered some.

"It is like him," said others.

But he said:

"I am he!"

"How were thine eyes opened?"

He told them about the matter. Then they asked him where the man was that had cured him.

"I know not," said he.

When a Jew did not observe the Sabbath, he was brought before the Sanhedrim, which judged his case.

Now that day happened to be the Sabbath. The enemies of Jesus hastened to lead to the Temple the man that had been healed through the virtue of the spittle of the

Master, mixed with clay. When they questioned him, he could only repeat what he had already said:

"He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed and do see."

Several Pharisees cried out, speaking of Jesus:

"This man is not of God, since he keepeth not the Sabbath."

Others said:

"How could a wicked man do such miracles?"

Divided among themselves, they turned to the man that was healed:

"And thou, what thinkest thou of him who opened thine eyes?"

"He is a prophet," answered the man.

Then the Jews sent men to fetch his father and his mother, for they refused to believe that he had ever been blind. And they asked them, saying:

"Is this your son?"

"This is our son."

"Is it true that he was born blind?"

"He was born blind; that is true."

"How then doth he now see?"

"He seeth, but by what means he now seeth, we know not. Who hath opened his eyes, we know not. He is of age; ask him."

The man and the woman knew that the men of the Sanhedrim had agreed that if any man did confess that Jesus was the Christ he should be put out of the synagogue, and they weighed prudently the words of their replies.

The Jews spoke again to him that had been blind.

"Give God the praise," they said unto him. "We know that this man is a sinner."

"Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not; but one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see!"

"What did he to thee? How opened he thine eyes?"

"I have told you already; did ye not hear? Wherefore would ye hear it again? Will ye also be his disciples?"

Furious, the Pharisees reviled the poor fellow. And they said unto him:

"Thou art his disciple! But we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses; as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is."

"Why, herein is a marvelous thing," said the man, "that ye know not from whence he is; and yet he hath opened mine eyes! Now we know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshiper of God and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing."

"Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?" cried the Pharisees, in indignation. And they drove him from the Temple.

Now Jesus heard about it. When he had found him, he asked him:

"Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"

The man said:

"Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?"

Jesus said:

"Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee."

The man said:

"Lord, I believe!"

And he worshiped him.

And Jesus said:

"For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see: and that they which see might be made blind."

Some of the Pharisees which were there asked:

"What are we? Are we blind also?"

"If ye were blind," Jesus answered them, "ye should have no sin. But now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

The evildoer who yet has good-will shall perhaps see the face of God. But he that is in the wrong and yet obstinately believes himself to know the truth, how can he escape from error?

◆ THE GOOD SHEPHERD ◆

Jesus taught the same lesson, in other terms, to Jews that came to hear him. But as he taught in parables, and as among his hearers many were deaf who thought they could hear, his words aroused passionate discussions.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

"He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

"To him the porter openeth; the sheep hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. He goeth before them and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

"And a stranger will they not follow; but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers."

The meaning of this comparison escaped the Jews. Jesus added this comment:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not hear them.

"I am the door. By me if any man enter in, he shall be saved; he shall go in and out and find pasture.

"The thief cometh not but for to steal and to kill and to destroy; I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

"But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming and leaveth the sheep and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them and scattereth the sheep.

"The hireling fleeth because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

"I am the good shepherd. And I know my sheep and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep.

"And other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also must I bring. And they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.

"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.

"This commandment have I received of my Father."

Jesus was willing to die in order to obey his Father; he gave his life as a sacrifice, so that the sacrifice of the just might pay the debt of the wicked and pagans. But in his death he found his life again, for if he left this

world it was to return to the Kingdom of Heaven and eternal life.

Among the Jews, some said:

"He hath a devil and is mad. Why hear ye him?"

And others:

"These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?"

And all were troubled, although none penetrated to the real meaning of the teaching of the Master.

◆ THE SEVENTY-TWO DISCIPLES ◆
◆ THE GOOD SAMARITAN ◆

The last of the pilgrims had left Jerusalem. Jesus went his way to Galilee.

The scribes, the priests, the Pharisees, had everywhere stirred up suspicion against him. They accused him of revolting against law and order. And, because of fear, the people no longer thronged, as they used to do, in the footsteps of the Master.

Abandoned, betrayed, though he was, Jesus would not give up the fight against error. He would not fail in his mission.

The Sanhedrim numbered seventy or seventy-two members; it was the high council of the Jewish nation.

Jesus chose disciples in like number and sent them before him to preach the Kingdom of God. Wherever they went he would take the Good News too.

About a fortnight later, the disciples came back filled with joy. They had been well received everywhere, and they had healed many sick.

"Lord," they said, "even the devils are subject unto us, through thy name!"

"I beheld Satan as lightning fall from Heaven!" Jesus answered them.

The disciples believed that the Saviour was rejoicing at their victory over unclean spirits. He was giving them a warning!

"Behold," he said, "I give you power to tread on serpents and on scorpions and over all the power of the enemy. Nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in Heaven."

Rejoice because you belong to God, and be not puffed up with vanity because of your power over evil forces. It was arrogance that precipitated Satan from the heights of Heaven—like lightning!

At the same moment, possessed of the Holy Spirit, Jesus trembled with joy. The victory of his own over the demons was to him a sure guarantee of their faith, for nothing is impossible to him that believeth. His word had been heard.

"I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth," he cried, "that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.

"All things are delivered to me of my Father. And no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him."

Jesus was affirming here, once again, his perfect union with his Father and the divine character of his mission.

"Come unto me," he said again, "all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

"Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

"For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Then a doctor of the law approached and to tempt the Master (although he was filled with false humility) demanded:

"Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus knew that to men trained in the law it was best to speak in terms of the law; otherwise they would take you for a heretic! The Saviour avoided the trap that was laid for him.

"What is written in the law?" he answered. "How readest thou?"

The scribe quoted Moses:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself."

"Thou hast answered right," said Jesus; "this do, and thou shalt live. That is, thou shalt merit life eternal."

But the doctor of the law went further, always with the hope of embarrassing the Master:

"Who is my neighbor?"

According to him, a stranger was in no sense worthy of his love, and any man who did not give witness of the Eternal, in terms in keeping with the law, was a stranger to him. But to Jesus, all men were brothers. He told this parable to the Jew:

"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his rai-

ment, and wounded him and departed, leaving him half dead.

"There came a priest; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

"And likewise a Levite.

"Now there came a Samaritan. Although he was not in the service of the Temple, like the priest and the Levite, and although his race was despised in Israel, this man had compassion on him, as he was wounded. He came where the unfortunate man was and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine. Then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn and took care of him.

"And on the morrow he took out two pence and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him, and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee."

Jesus was silent for a moment; then he questioned the scribe:

"Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves?"

"He that showed mercy on him," said the Jew.

Then said Jesus unto him:

"Go and do thou likewise."

◆ MARTHA AND MARY ◆

At that time, as Jesus went along the way with his disciples, they entered into the village of Bethany, which is not far from Jerusalem.

A woman named Martha received him into her house.

Martha had a sister called Mary, who was no other than the sinner of Magdala.*

They received the Master with great joy and respect.

Martha was an energetic and orderly person. It was she who prepared the meal, set the table, and watched over everything so that it might be worthy of her guest.

But Mary sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word.

Martha, irritated, said to Jesus:

"Lord, dost thou not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Bid her, therefore, that she help me."

But Jesus answered her:

"Martha! Martha! Thou art careful and troubled about many things. Why worry about so many things? But one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her!"

The Saviour was remembering the words of David:

"One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord."[1]

Mary only saw Jesus, only heard Jesus; she was absorbed in him. Nothing distracted her attention or her soul from the Master, who was talking to her about the Kingdom of his Father.

She was filled with confidence, faith, love.

Martha attached too much importance to the affairs of material life; how could she be tranquil? In her agitation she diffused her soul, and there was no room in her life for meditation.

[1] Psalms, xxvii.

◈ KNOCK AND IT SHALL BE OPENED UNTO YOU ◈

And, behold, Jesus, who never ceased teaching his disciples, said unto them one day:

"In the middle of the night one of you receives unexpectedly the visit of a friend. Not having anything to offer him, he goes and knocks upon the door of a neighbor and says unto him, explaining his difficulty, My friend, lend me three loaves.

"But the neighbor replies, Trouble me not; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee bread.

"Now I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

"Verily," continued Jesus, recalling what he had said on the mountain; "ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

Go to God in your distress, pray unto him, implore him; if he does not satisfy immediately, do not be discouraged. Redouble your prayers; do not be afraid to implore the Heavenly Father: the greater your confidence in him, the greater shall be his pity.

At that time, as he was on the way to the house of one of his disciples, two blind men crossed the path of Jesus. The afflicted men, hearing his name, cried out:

"Thou Son of David, have mercy on us!"

And he opened their eyes because they were not afraid to plead with him several times.

Then they brought him a dumb man possessed with a devil. Jesus cast out the devil, and the dumb man spoke.

"It was never so seen in Israel," said the multitude, marveling.

Now a Pharisee, who was entertaining some of his friends at his home, came and besought Jesus to honor the banquet with his presence. Why should the Master refuse this man what he had accorded to another? And he went in and sat down to meat, without having washed his hands, a thing which astonished the Pharisees.

But Jesus said unto him:

"Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter, but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. Ye fools! Did not he that made that which is without, make that which is within also?"

To clean the hands with water is good, but it is still better to purify the soul. Instead of being so strict in the observance of the law, should not the Pharisees have been more helpful to the poor?

"Deal thy bread to the hungry, and bring the poor that are cast out to thy house. When thou seest the naked, cover him, hide not thyself from thine own flesh. Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward."[1]

Thus spake Isaiah.

[1] Isaiah, lviii.

And Jesus:

"Give alms of such things as ye have, and, behold, all things are clean unto you."

Then:

"Woe unto you, Pharisees! For ye are as graves which appear not and the men that walk over them are not aware of them."

Men are defiled by contact with you, without knowing it!

"Master," said a doctor of the law, "thus saying, thou reproachest us also."

"Woe unto you also, ye lawyers," replied Jesus, "for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers."

You crush the believer with rules that you do not keep yourselves!

And as he said these things, the doctors and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently and to provoke him to speak of many things, seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.

Outside there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people. Jesus, taking his disciples aside, repeated what he had already said to them:

"Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."

◈ THE PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN ◈

Jesus was withdrawing, when a Jew came up to him. He was in conflict with his brother and appealed the question to the sense of justice of the Master.

"Master," said he, "speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me."

But Jesus scorned earthly possessions, for they had nothing to do with the soul. Therefore he answered:

"Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?"

Then, addressing those that surrounded him:

"Take heed and beware of covetousness. Whatever your riches may be, they will not give you life."

And, as was his custom, he illustrated his thought with a parable:

"The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do? for my barns are too small. I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

"Now God said unto him, Thou fool! This night thy soul shall be required of thee. Then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?

"So is he," concluded Jesus, "that layeth up treasure for himself upon earth and is not rich toward God.

"Watch therefore," he said again to his disciples, "for ye know not when the Lord doth come. Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning, like the good servants that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding. When he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

"Blessed are those servants whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching.

"Verily I say unto you that he shall gird himself and make them take their places at table and will come forth and serve them with his own hands. And if he shall

come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, blessed are those servants if they are found awake.

"If the head of the family had known at what hour the thief would come to rob him, he would have watched and not have suffered the wall of his house to be broken through.

"Be ye therefore ready and watching, for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not."

"Lord," asked Peter, "speakest thou unto us, or even to all?"

Without giving a direct answer to his question, Jesus said to him:

"Who then is that faithful and wise steward whom his lord shall make ruler over his household to give them their portion of wheat in due season? Is it not the devoted servant whom he found watching upon his return?

"Blessed is that servant, for I say unto you, verily his master will make him ruler over all that he hath.

"But if that servant say, My master is not ready to come, and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink and to be drunken, the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unworthy servants.

"And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself for the return of his master, shall be beaten with many stripes, many more than the servant which hath sinned through ignorance of the will of the master.

"For," said Jesus, thinking of those he had chosen to be his disciples, "unto whomsoever much is given, of him

shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."

At the day of judgment, God will require more of him whom he hath visited than of him to whom the truth hath not been revealed!

Among other sayings, the Master spake further unto his followers:

"I am come to send fire on the earth. And what will I, if it be already kindled?"

And then:

"But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"

He came to bring the fire of passion, of faith, of truth: he gave light unto men's minds; he kindled their hearts.

And he was soon to be baptized with blood.

◆ PONTIUS PILATE ◆
◆ THE BOWED WOMAN ◆
◆ THE MAN WITH THE DROPSY ◆

In those days Judea was under Roman domination. The representative of the Empire, who had the title of procurator, was called Pontius Pilate. He was a just man, according to the law, proud of his race, full of scorn for the Jews, who were a turbulent, undisciplined, and mystic people. Now Pontius Pilate loved order and believed only in the supremacy of Rome.

The Jews had vowed a fierce hatred against him, because he treated them brutally, without respect for their customs, their ways, and, above all, their religion. They had revolted against him several times, after acts of his which they considered to be provocations.

There came a day when the procurator mingled the blood of Galileans with the blood of animals sacrificed upon the altar of the Lord.

These Galileans were conspirators who wanted to throw off the Roman yoke. Pilate, taking advantage of the fact that they had met in the Temple to make sacrifices, had them cut down by his soldiers.

The matter was told to Jesus, who asked:

"Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such a death?"

He knew that the Jews had firmly fixed in their minds the idea that misfortune strikes a man in proportion to his sins.

He disabused them.

"I tell you nay," said he, "but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

And he asked them this question:

"Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower of Siloam fell and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?"

He disabused them further, and again he said:

"Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Then he added this parable:

"A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard. And he came and sought fruit thereon and found none. Then he said unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years, this fig tree produces nothing. It cumbereth the ground: cut it down!

"The dresser of the vineyard said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also. I shall dig about it and dung it. And if it bear fruit, we shall keep it; if not, we shall cut it down."

Before taking down the tree, it is proper to take care

of it; before condemning a man, help must be given him. There will be plenty of time to judge him if he refuses to listen to the Good News.

Jesus came to fertilize the fig tree, and he refused to despair of the souls of men.

On his way to Jerusalem, he went about teaching in the villages and the cities.

One day when he was speaking in a synagogue, he saw a woman which had a spirit of infirmity which for eighteen years kept her bowed toward the earth. She could not lift her eyes toward Heaven.

Jesus called her to him and said unto her:

"Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity."

Then he laid his hands on her. And immediately she was made straight and glorified God.

But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because the Master had made this cure on the day sacred to rest, said unto the people:

"There are six days for work; in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day."

"Hypocrite!" answered Jesus, "doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to water him? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?"

Some time after that, Jesus had an opportunity to repeat this severe lesson. A prominent Pharisee had invited him to his table. Now there was in the room a man sick of the dropsy. And all the Jews who took part in the feast

were observing the Master to see what he would do, as this was the Sabbath day.

Jesus knew very well what these people were thinking to themselves. He began to speak, and he asked the doctors of the law and the Pharisees if it were right to heal the sick on the Sabbath day.

The Jews sensed the irony in the question, for the reply could only be made in the negative, and they held their tongues.

Then Jesus laid his hands on the man sick of the dropsy, healed him, and sent him away. Then he said:

"Which of you, if his ox or his ass fell into a well on the Sabbath day, would not take it out straightway?"

At these words the scribes were filled with confusion, while the people rejoiced in all the glorious things they saw done by the Master.

◈ THE STRAIT GATE ◈

Another time one came to ask Jesus:

"Lord, is it true that only a small number of sinners shall be saved?"

And Jesus answered, addressing the crowd round about him:

"Verily, I say unto you, strive to enter in at the strait gate. Many will seek to enter in and shall not be able.

"When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, it will do you no good to knock and cry, Lord! Lord! open unto us. He will answer unto you, I know not whence ye are.

"If ye say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets, he will answer, I

know not whence ye are. Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity!

"Then," added Jesus, "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the Kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

"And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down at table in the Kingdom of God. And, behold, the last shall be first, and the first shall be last."

And so there shall be received in Heaven only those who merit it through their constant efforts to be purified, those who have believed on the word of Christ. Because they rejected him, the Jews, who were the first in the affection of the Eternal, shall become the last, after all the peoples of the earth have come to the Gospel.

The same day there came certain of the Pharisees secretly to Jesus.

"Get thee out," they said unto him, with an air of considering his welfare; "get thee out from here, for Herod will kill thee!"

Jesus answered them:

"Go ye and tell that fox that I cast out demons and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected."

Jesus was speaking figuratively, as usual. He did not mean to announce that he was to die in three days, but only that his sacrifice was near at hand. He had only a short time in which to relieve those who were suffering from sickness or demons. And meaning the same thing he added, not without bitter irony:

"Nevertheless I must walk to-day, to-morrow, and the

day following, for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem."

Now continuing on his way, he arrived before the Holy City.

And he cried out with profound sadness:

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings! And ye were deaf to my voice!"

Then, speaking to the Jews who were round about him:

"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate; and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me until the time when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

Ye shall be plunged in affliction, deprived of the presence of God, until ye confess your faults and commune with me.

◆ THE FEAST OF THE DEDICATION ◆

And they were celebrating in Jerusalem the Feast of the Dedication, and it was winter.

Herod the Great had reconstructed the Temple. Now like Solomon when he finished building the house of the Eternal, each year the Jews used to dedicate the sanctuary to God. They let their prayers rise toward Heaven, lest the Eternal withdraw from the dwelling that had been built to his glory by the people of Israel. They waved the branches of palms, sang psalms, made sacrifices upon the altars, in memory of the twenty-two thousand

bullocks and the hundred and twenty thousand sheep that King Solomon sacrificed, for a sacrifice of prosperity.

They celebrated also the victorious Maccabeans, who delivered Jerusalem from the Syrian yoke and purified the Temple.*

◈ A PSALM OF DAVID ◈

O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, because his mercy endureth forever.

Let Israel now say, that his mercy endureth forever.

Let the House of Aaron now say, that his mercy endureth forever.

Let them now that fear the Lord say, that his mercy endureth forever.

I called upon the Lord in distress: the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place.

The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?

The Lord taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me.

It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.

It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.

All nations compassed me about: but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them.

They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about; but in the name of the Lord I will destroy them.

They compassed me about like bees, they are quenched as the fire of thorns: for in the name of the Lord I will destroy them.

Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall: but the Lord helped me.

The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation.

The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly.

The right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly!

I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.

The Lord hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death.

Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord:

This the gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter.

I will praise thee, for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.

The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.

This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.

Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord: we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord.

God is the Lord and his glory is upon us.

Bind the sheep with cords for the sacrifice, and lead it even unto the horns of the altar.

Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, I will exalt thee.

O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever.[1]

◆ I AM THE SON OF GOD ◆

Jesus and his disciples entered the gates of the city and went up to the Temple.

Now the scribes and the doctors of the law, seeing him in Solomon's porch, came and gathered round him. They were working together to lay a trap for him, for they had not abandoned the odious plan of bringing the Master before the Sanhedrim.

"How long," they asked him, "how long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly."

Jesus brought their trick out into the open. Although he had affirmed his mission times without number, he was perfectly willing to answer these impostors.

"I told you and ye believed not. The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep.

"My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

"My father, which gave them to me, is greater than all! No man is able to pluck them out of my father's hand.

"I and my Father are one."

Then, as they had already wanted to do several times, the Jews took up stones to stone him. But Jesus said simply:

[1] Psalms, cxviii.

"At the will of my Father, many good works have I showed you: for which of those works do ye stone me?"

The sorrowful irony of this answer was not lost upon the men of the Temple. They shouted angrily:

"For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God."

Then Jesus, to remind them of the word of Jehovah himself, as it is written in the Scriptures, said:

"How long, said the Lord unto the judges of Israel, how long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked?

"Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.

"Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.

"They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are shaken.

"I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the Most High.

"But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes."[1]

"If the law," added Jesus, "calls them gods to whom the word of the Most High was addressed, and if the Scripture cannot be broken, how can ye say to him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest! because I said, I am the Son of God?

"If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works:

[1] Psalms, lxxxii.

that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in him."

The anger of the scribes and the Pharisees redoubled at these words. They sought again to take the Master. But he escaped them and was able to go away from the Temple.

Leaving Jerusalem, Jesus went again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized.

And there he abode.

And there came unto him a great multitude of people.

And they said:

"John did no miracle; but all things that John spake of this man were true."

And many believed on him.

◈ THE MARRIAGE OF THE KING'S SON ◈

It happened one day that Jesus was in the house of a rich Pharisee who had invited him to a meal. He noticed that the guests—scribes and doctors of the law—sought to occupy the best places at the table. Straightway the vanity of these people inspired him to teach in this parable:

"When thou art bidden to a wedding, do not put thyself forward, lest a more honorable man than thou be bidden, and he that bade thee come and say to thee, Give this man place. For thou with shame shalt see thyself take the lowest room.

"But when thou art bidden, choose the least important place. And when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher. That will do thee honor before all."

And he said unto them what he had told his disciples:

"Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Then, speaking to the Pharisee whose guest he was, he said:

"When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again and a recompense be made thee.

"But call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. They cannot recompense thee. Rejoice, for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

In exchange for what is given them, the rich can only give of what they possess here below; the poor have nothing, but they open Heaven to their disinterested benefactors.

Be charitable; guard yourselves from all vanity.

Now one of the guests cried:

"Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God!"

Jesus answered:

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son. When all was ready, the prince sent his servant to inform the guests. But they did not wish to come.

"Again he sent other servants to them who took them the very words of the king: All is ready; my bullocks and my fatlings are killed; come unto the marriage.

"All made excuses:

"I have bought a piece of ground, said one, and I must needs go and see it. I pray thee have me excused.

"I have bought five yoke of oxen, said another, and I must go to prove them. I pray thee excuse me.

"I have married a wife, said a third; I cannot leave her. I pray thee excuse me.

"The servants, when they insisted, were brutally handled and covered with insults; some were even killed. When the king heard thereof, he was very angry. And he ordered his armies to put the murderers to death and to burn their city.

"Then he said to his servants, Those men were not worthy to take part in the feast. Go therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

"So those servants ran to the highways, and gathered together all, as many as they found, both bad and good, so that the banqueting hall was filled. After this they told the king.

"Lord, they said to him, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there are empty places around the table.

"The king replied, Go out into the highways, search along the hedges, find all the unfortunate, all the lame, all the halt, all the blind that ye shall see, compel them to come into my house. For verily I say, none of those that were bidden to dine shall taste of the feast.

"And when the king entered the banqueting hall to see those that were at table, he saw a man who, contrary to custom, had not on a wedding garment prepared for him as had been done for the other guests.

"Friend, asked the king, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?

"The man was speechless.

"Then the king said to the servants, Bind him hand and foot and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness. And there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

"For," concluded Jesus, "many are called, but few are chosen."

By this parable Jesus was foretelling the lot of the Jews and of Jerusalem. He had come for them; they rejected him, preferring the good things of this world to the joys of the Kingdom of God. The pagans were then to be called to take the places that had been reserved for the Jews at the Heavenly feast.

More than that, it was not enough to be bidden to the Holy Table. The wedding garment must be worn, one must be clothed in virtue, in order to be worthy to appear before the Lord.

Jesus had left the house of the Pharisee, and a great multitude of people followed him. What did all these people want? What did they expect? The greater part fancied, as they were limited in vision, that he was to restore the power of the kingdom of Israel.

Now Jesus had declared to the apostles that in order to follow him one must forsake all, abandon everything, and without looking backward.

That is why he spoke to the crowd in the following way:

"For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, they mock him, if he has had to abandon the enterprise. This man, they would say, began to build and was not able to finish.

"Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first to calculate the chances he has of being victorious. With the ten thousand men which he hath, can he resist victoriously an enemy that has twenty thousand? If he is in doubt he profiteth by the fact that his enemy is yet a long way off; he sendeth an ambassador and desireth conditions of peace.

"So likewise," said Jesus, "whosoever he be among you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

"Salt is good, but if the salt have lost his savor, who will give it back? It is good for nothing. It is neither fit for the land nor yet for the dunghill: men cast it out.

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

And this meant that before following him and undertaking the work of our purification, and before a combat with wickedness, it is proper to reflect and take account of our real strength, in order to avoid the shame of abandoning all and becoming like unto the salt that lost its savor.

◆ THE REPENTANT SINNER ◆
◆ THE PRODIGAL SON ◆

Because he had pity for the humble and sinners drew near to hear him and he did not drive them away, the Pharisees and scribes, always swift to criticize him, accused Jesus of seeking a following among the dregs of the population. He knew this and one day gave them a parable. The meaning was clear, but they pretended not to understand. They were indignant about it.

"What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he

lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost? When he hath found it he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home he calleth together his friends and his neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!

"I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

"Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle and sweep the house and seek diligently until she find it? And when she hath found the piece of money, doth she not call her friends and her neighbors? And she saith,

"Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost!

"Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

Now the Jews pretended to believe that the Master thought more of the sinner who repented than of the good man who had nothing to repent, because he was blameless. Jesus simply wanted to make them understand what he had often proclaimed, that he came to save sinners, not the just, those who did not need to be recalled from sin. He showed them through his stories, which were told in the Oriental fashion, the joy of the angels of God when they saw in Heaven a repenting sinner, a lost soul found again!

With the same intention, he gave them the following parable in which the prodigal child took the place of the sheep and the lost piece of money:

"A certain man had two sons. The younger said to his

father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me.

"And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son went away, taking with him all that his father had given him. He went into a far country and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

"There arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want. He was obliged to enter the service of a farmer who sent him to take care of swine.

"And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat. But it was not allowed him.

"And when he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare? And I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee. I am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants.

"And he arose and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.

"Father, cried the son, I have sinned against Heaven and in thy sight and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

"But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet as it should be done to a free man. And bring hither the fatted calf and kill it. Let us eat and be merry! For this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!

"And they began to be merry.

"Now his elder son was in the field. And as he came and drew nigh to the house he was surprised to hear

music and dancing. A servant told him, Thy brother is come. And thy father killed the fatted calf because he hath received him safe and sound.

"The elder son then was angry. In spite of his father's pleadings, he refused to see his brother.

"What! said he, these many years do I serve thee and yet thou never gavest me a kid that I might make merry with my friends! But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf!

"Son, replied the father, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. But it was meet that we should make merry and be glad, for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost and is found."

◆ THE UNFAITHFUL STEWARD ◆

Jesus made every occasion an opportunity to continue his teaching. What he said about the lost sheep and the prodigal son offended the men of the Temple, for they had a passion for being deaf to his words. But what he said about the unfaithful steward offended them still more. The affection that they had for the good things of this world, the "riches of iniquity," rendered them incapable of understanding the ssublime lessons in unselfishness, generosity, and spiritual love that the Master gave them.

"There was a certain rich man which had a steward that wasted his goods. He sent for him and said:

"How is it that I hear this of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship. or thou mayest be no longer steward.

"What shall I do, for my lord taketh away from me

the stewardship? said the man. I cannot dig. Beg? Of that I am ashamed. He reflected and then said, I am resolved what to do that when I am put out of the stewardship they may receive me into their houses.

"He called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou?

"One hundred measures of oil.

"Take thy bill. Sit down there Write fifty.

"And thou, said he, how much owest thou?

"One hundred measures of wheat.

"Take back thy bill and write four score.

"And when he heard about the matter, the lord commended the unjust steward for having acted with foresight. For the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light."

The children of this world, the men attached to the good things of this world, are more astute when it comes to protecting their possessions than are pious souls who would win the benefits of the Kingdom of Heaven!

"And I say unto you," continued Jesus, "make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations."

Give what you possess; no wealth is worth as much as Heavenly felicity. The poor that you have helped, that you have loved, will love you in return. As they will have suffered much, the Kingdom of Heaven shall belong to them, and they will receive you there, in recompense for your good deeds.

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much. He that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

"If, therefore, ye have not been faithful in the un-

righteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?"

If you have dishonorably administered the goods of this world, who will trust you with the rights of the Kingdom of Heaven? If you neglect the fortune of others, is it credible that you will be more concerned with your own fortune, the salvation of your soul?

"No man can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon"—the God of Heaven and the god of gold!

But the Pharisees, who were covetous and found happiness in the possession of riches, derided the Master.

"Ye pretend to be just men; ye justify yourselves before men," said Jesus unto them. "But God knoweth your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."

He accused them of being scornful of the law, for they tolerated without protest the wickedness of the powerful.

Had not the Eternal said unto Israel, through the mouth of Moses:

"None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness . . . Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife; it is thy nakedness." [1]

Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, had repudiated his wife in order to marry Herodias, wife of his own brother and his own niece, without having the priests cry anath-

[1] Leviticus, xviii.

ema upon his head. That is why Jesus declared unto the Pharisees and the doctors:

"The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the Kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

"But it is easier for Heaven and earth to pass than one tittle of the law to fail.

"Whosoever putteth away his wife and marrieth another committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery."

◈ THE RICH MAN ◈

To these Pharisees, greedy for honors and riches, to these doctors who did not respect the law of which they had hypocritically had themselves constituted the guardians, Jesus was to give another lesson.

It was the parable about the wicked rich man and Lazarus:

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen. Every day he fared sumptuously.

"And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores. Imploring pity of every one, he would have been grateful to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. But only the stray dogs came and licked his sores.

"Now it happened that the beggar died. And he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom—where the just await the arrival of the Messiah who would take them into paradise.

"The rich man died also. And he was buried with pomp which could not keep him from being thrown into hell.

"In the midst of his torments, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom.

"Father Abraham, he cried, have mercy on me. Send Lazarus here that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am horribly tormented in this flame.

"My son, Abraham answered unto him, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things. But now he is comforted, and it is thy turn for torment.

"Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

"Father, then said the rich man, I pray thee that thou wouldst send Lazarus to my five brothers, in the house of my father, that he may inform them of all this so that they might avoid coming into this place of torment.

"They have Moses and the prophets, said Abraham; let them hear them.

"They will not hear them; but, O Father Abraham, if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

"If they hear not Moses and the prophets, said Abraham, neither will they hear one that should rise from the dead."

For there is no way to convince the unbeliever, and there is no salvation for him that is without faith.

The words of the Master troubled the minds of the apostles and the disciples, those simple souls who had difficulty in following him to the heights to which they led. For the most part, his parables remained as mysteries to them; the ill intentioned comments of the Phar-

isees added to their unrest. In these painful moments they went to Jesus.

"Lord," they said to him, "increase our faith."

Jesus understood the reason of their trouble and felt it deeply. If they had really believed on him it all would have seemed easy and natural to them.

He said to them:

"If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea. And it should obey you."

Reason ends by finding reasonable even that which is beyond its control, for it does not know its own limits. Pride cannot be measured and never abdicates.

To doubt what one does not understand is to be lacking in reason.

Excessive pride is an obstacle to admitting what reason is unable to seize.

And Jesus said to his disciples:

"But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? And will ye not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself and serve me. When I have eaten and drunken thou shalt eat and drink.

"Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not.

"So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do."

Be free of pride; submit humbly to the sovereign will of the Father.

◈ THE RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS ◈

At that time, a man of Bethany came and said unto Jesus:

"Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick."

This man was sent by Martha and her sister, Mary the sinner, which anointed the feet of the Lord with fragrant ointment and wiped them with her hair. Her hair was wavy like a herd of goats upon the slopes of the mountains of Gilead.*

Now Jesus loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus, their brother who was sick. But he only answered:

"This sickness is not unto death: it is for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified."

And he abode two days still in the same place where he was. Then after that said he to his disciples:

"Let us go into Judea again."

The disciples remonstrated with him, for they thought it would be an imprudence.

"Master, a few days ago the Jews sought to stone thee, and thou goest in the midst of them again?"

"Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth because there is no light."

As for him, he was walking in the light of truth. He had nothing to fear. After he had said this, however, he added:

"Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep."

"Lord," cried the disciples, "if he sleep, he shall do well!"

Now Lazarus was dead, and it was that which Jesus was announcing. But the disciples thought him sleeping, and they were glad over it, for sleep was a good sign in sickness.

Then Jesus disabused them and told them plainly:

"Lazarus is dead."

And alluding to their puny faith, which always clamored for a miracle, he said:

"I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent that ye may believe. Nevertheless let us go unto him."

The disciples were hesitating; they dreaded to cross the Jordan and go back into Judea. One of them, Thomas, also called Didymus, said:

"Let us also go, that we may die with him."

He was convinced that the Pharisees would take the Master to put him to death.

When Jesus and his disciples arrived in Bethany Lazarus had lain in the grave four days already.

Bethany was scarcely more than fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem, and many of the friends of Martha and Mary had come from the city to comfort them concerning the death of their brother.

And Jesus was waiting for the crowd to disperse before entering the village.

But Martha had heard of his presence and went and met him, but Mary sat still in the house.

And Martha said unto Jesus:

"Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died. But I know that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee."

Jesus said:

"Thy brother shall rise again."

Martha said:

"I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

Jesus said:

"I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

Martha said:

"Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God, which should come into the world!"

When she had performed this act of faith, Martha went back to her sister.

"The Master is come and calleth for thee," she whispered to her.

Mary arose quickly and ran to the place where Jesus was.

Her friends followed her, thinking she was going to weep at the grave of Lazarus.

Then when Mary was come and saw the Master, she fell down at his feet and, like Martha, asked him sadly why he came so late.

"Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died!"

When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in spirit and was troubled. Full of compassion he asked:

"Where have ye laid him?"

"Lord, come and see."

Jesus wept.

And the Jews said among themselves:

"Behold how he loved him."

And, remembering what the Master had accomplished in Jerusalem, some added:

"Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the man born blind, have caused that Lazarus should not have died?"

Jesus therefore, again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

"Take ye away the stone," said Jesus.

"Lord," sobbed Martha, "by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days."

But Jesus answered her:

"Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldest believe thou shouldest see the glory of God?"

When they took away the stone, Jesus lifted up his eyes and cried:

"Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always, but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me."

Then, in a loud voice, he commanded:

"Lazarus, come forth from the tomb!"

And Lazarus came out of the grave. His hands were bound with gravecloths, and his face was bound about with a napkin.

"Loose him and let him go," said Jesus.

In the crowd of Jews who had come to see Martha and Mary, some believed on the Saviour, when they saw Lazarus come forth living from the sepulcher. But others, impenitent doubters, hastened to tell the Pharisees what things Jesus had done.

Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and the

men of the Temple dreaded the presence of Jesus in Jerusalem. The members of the Sanhedrim therefore assembled in a council.

"What shall we decide? This man doeth miracles," they said. "If we let him continue, all men will believe on him. The Romans will take advantage of it: they will come and ruin our city and our nation."

These wicked servants of God, greedy for honors and power, trembled for their places; they were persuaded that Jesus would attempt to arouse the people against their authority and also against the authority of the Romans, in order to have himself crowned as a king.

That same year Joseph Caiaphas was the High Priest. It was at his house that the doctors of the law, the priests and other notables were meeting. The place where the dwelling of the pontiff stood, outside the city, has since been named the Hill of Evil Counsel.

As the members of the Sanhedrim were in a state of panic, Caiaphas believed it his duty to intervene:

"Ye know nothing at all," said he. "How is it that ye consider not that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not?"

It was within the power of the High Priest to speak as an oracle. Without suspecting it, Caiaphas was obedient to an inner voice when he prophesied that Jesus should die for his nation, and not alone for his nation but for all the dispersed children of God, united in one flock.

And from that day forth the priests held many secret conferences in order to consider means of putting Jesus to death.

But the Saviour, informed of their evil designs, avoided showing himself publicly. He withdrew unto a

country near to the wilderness with his disciples, into a city called Ephraim.

Meantime, to purify themselves before the Passover, pilgrims came from everywhere to Jerusalem. Many were they who wished to come to Jesus, for they had heard marvelous things of him. They looked for him everywhere in the Temple. And they asked among themselves:

"What think ye? Will he not come to the feast?"

No one knew anything about him. Besides, any man knowing the intentions of the Master would not have revealed them for fear of causing his ruin, for the priests and the Pharisees were determined to take him.

◈ HEALING TEN LEPERS ◈
◈ THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST ◈

Now Jesus, who had decided in his heart to return to Jerusalem, left his retreat in Ephraim; but instead of going directly to the Holy City, he went out of his way and passed through the midst of Galilee. His hour had not yet come.

He was walking along with his disciples when at the outskirts of the village he saw a group of ten lepers. The unfortunate men were living there isolated, according to the requirement of the law. Clothed in tattered garments, bareheaded, their beards covered with cloths, they were hideous to behold.

At the approach of Jesus and his disciples there was heard their sinister wailing: "Unclean! Unclean!" This cry was meant to warn those that heard it that they must keep away. But, recognizing the Master, they implored him to have pity on them:

"O Jesus! O Master! Have mercy on us!"

And Jesus said unto them:

"Go! Show yourselves unto the priests."

The ten lepers immediately went on their way, and it happened that as they went all were cleansed. And one of them turned back and with a loud voice glorified God. And he fell down at the feet of the Saviour, with his face to the ground.

Now this one was a Samaritan.

Then Jesus said to his disciples:

"Were there not ten cleansed? Where are the nine others? Must it be that this stranger alone returns to give glory to God?"

Then he said unto the Samaritan, what formerly he told Mary the sinner:

"Arise, go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole."

Some of the Pharisees, no doubt because they were troubled by this latest miracle, came to find the Master. And as it was his habit to preach the Kingdom of God, they questioned him, to know whether this kingdom should soon appear.

To their minds, the Kingdom of God was not separated from this world, and they believed that its establishment would be announced through some unprecedented miracle.

Jesus disabused them.

"The Kingdom of God," he told them, "will in no wise come with pomp or remarkable action. Neither shall they say: Lo here! or, Lo there! For, behold, the Kingdom of God is within you."

Then, to his disciples:

"The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one

of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it. And they shall say to you: He is here; or, He is there. Go not after them nor follow them." (Let not yourselves be seduced by false prophets!)

"For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under Heaven, shineth unto the other part under Heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day."

The whole world shall be dazzled by it!

"But first must he suffer many things and be rejected of this generation.

"And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

"They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark and the flood came and destroyed them all.

"Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot.

"They did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from Heaven, and reduced all flesh to cinders.

"Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

"In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take his garments away; and he that is in the field will do well not to run to his farm.

"Remember Lot's wife"—who was changed into a pillar of salt for turning back when fleeing from Sodom, thus disobeying the command of the Lord.

"Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall find it again.

"Verily I say unto you, In that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the

other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together at the same mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the same field; the one shall be taken, and the other left."

Thus the coming of the Son of man will lighten like lightning; it will be devastating like fire and the waters from Heaven. Woe unto those who shall fear for their goods and their life; they shall be condemned forever. But those that shall have left all in order to answer the call of the Son of man, even if they perish, they shall gain the Kingdom of God and life eternal.

As usual, the disciples did not understand the symbolic meaning of this prophecy. And they demanded:

"Where shall it be, Lord?"

"Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together," Jesus answered.

There where rottenness—sin—is to be found, there will the anger of the Father strike!

The disciples were filled with terror, and Jesus comforted them with a parable by which he showed them that he who prays without ceasing has the right to hope everything of divine justice.

"There was in a city a judge," said he, "which feared not God, neither regarded any one. And a widow was also there.

"Avenge me of my adversary, she asked of the magistrate. But he would have nothing to do with it. One day, however, importuned by the unceasing recriminations of this woman, he said within himself, Though I fear not God and have regard for no one, I will avenge her so that she cease to trouble me!

"There," said Jesus, "meditate upon the words of

this judge. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily.

"But when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on earth?"

After that he talked to them of those who are obedient to a wicked pride, who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others.

And this was the occasion for a new parable:

"Two men went up into the Temple to pray: a Pharisee and a publican.

"The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself:

"God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are! They are extortioners, unjust, adulterers. Nor am I like this publican: I fast twice in the week, and I give tithes of all that I possess.

"And the publican, standing afar off from this man, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto Heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

"I tell you," added Jesus, "this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

◈ THE PHARISEES AND THE LAW ◈

When Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee and came into the coasts of Judea, beyond Jordan.

And great multitudes followed him, and he continued to heal the sick and cause the people to hear the Good News.

Now the Pharisees came to him, not to receive instruction in his doctrines, but to tempt him. They had a secret hope that they could draw him into a mistake concerning the law.

"Is it lawful," they asked him, "for a man to put away his wife for every cause?"

When they posed this question, the Pharisees knew what they were doing. They were familiar with Jesus' code of morals, which was not in agreement with the ways of the day as they were admitted by the doctors. They did not doubt that the Master would speak out against divorce, and this would alienate the sympathy of the crowd and would bring upon him the anger of the tetrarch Herod, who had repudiated his wife in order to marry his own niece.

"What did Moses command you?" Jesus answered them.

The Pharisees remembered the words of Moses:

"When a man hath taken a wife and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her, then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand and send her out of his house." [1]

"Have you not read," continued Jesus, "what the Creator did in the beginning?"

And he in turn reminded them of the words of Moses:

"God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

"And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

[1] Deuteronomy, xxiv.

"And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her to Adam.

"And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called Isha—Woman—for she was taken out of Ish—Man.

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." [1]

"Thus," said Jesus, "they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

"Then," asked the Pharisees, "why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement and to put her away?"

Jesus said:

"Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives. But from the beginning it was not so.

"But I say unto you—with Moses—whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery. And, in the same way, the woman who leaveth her husband to marry another man, committeth adultery."

The customs at that time were so lax that the disciples themselves were shocked at the severity of the Master. When they were alone with him they could not help saying:

"If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry."

Must they be able to get along without wives?

"Now," said Jesus, "all men cannot receive this say-

[1] Genesis, i–ii.

ing, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb; and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men; and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake.

"He that is able to receive it, let him receive it!"

The Master was concluding this praise of voluntary chastity when some women brought unto him their little children, that he should put his hands on them. But the disciples wanted to send them away. Jesus was displeased.

"Suffer the little children to come unto me," said he, "and forbid them not; for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

"Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."

And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

Then he left that place.

◈ IT IS EASIER FOR A CAMEL ◈

And there came one running, and knelt to him.

"Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

Jesus helped him to rise.

"Why callest thou me good?" he said. "Only God is good."

And he added:

"If thou wilt enter into life, thou knowest the commandments."

"Which?"

"Thou shalt not do murder; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; honor thy father and thy mother; thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

"But, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. What lack I yet?"

Then Jesus, beholding him, loved him because he saw the honesty of his heart. And he said to him:

"One thing thou lackest: if thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast. Then give all to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven. After that come, take up the cross, and follow me."

At these words, the young man was sad. And he went away. He was grieved, for he had great possessions.

That is why Jesus said to his disciples:

"How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God!"

The disciples appeared to be astonished, and he spoke to them again with gentleness:

"My little children, how hard it is for them that trust in the riches of this world to enter into the Kingdom of God!

"Verily it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God."

The disciples could only think.

"Who then can be saved?" they asked themselves.

Jesus looked at them a long time and then said:

"The things which are impossible with men are possible with God. With God all things are possible!"

But Peter:

"We have forsaken all to follow thee. What shall become of us?"

And Jesus:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

"There is no man that hath left house, or his father, or his mother, or his sisters, or his brothers, or his children, or his wife, or his land, for my sake and the Gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions. In the world to come he shall have eternal life.

"But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.

"And many shall be called, but few chosen!"

◆ THE TIME HAS COME ◆

One day when he was walking ahead of them, the Master called the apostles around him. They were afraid, for Jesus was taking them toward Jerusalem, and they dreaded going there, both for him and for themselves.

They were alone with him, and he spoke, as he had many times spoken, of the fate that awaited him in the Holy City.

There was nothing in the situation that could allay their worry!

"Behold," he said unto them, "we go up to Jerusalem. The time has come when all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. He shall be delivered unto the priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death and shall deliver him to the Gentiles. And they shall

mock him and shall scourge him and shall spit upon him, and shall cause him to die upon the cross. But the third day he shall rise again."

The twelve understood none of these things, but their fears only increased.

At that moment Salome, who was the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee, approached and fell down at the feet of the Master.

Astonished, Jesus asked her:

"What wilt thou?"

"Lord," said she, "grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand and the other on the left, in the glory of thy kingdom."

James and John made the same plea.

Then Jesus answered:

"Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

"We are able!"

They did not know that their Master was referring to the cup of bitterness and to the baptism of blood which were reserved for him. Nor could they foresee that they must endure, because of him, persecution and death.

And Jesus said unto them:

"Ye shall drink indeed of my cup and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with. But to sit on my right hand or on my left? That is not for me to decide. My Father shall make the places according to his will, for those whom he hath chosen."

The other apostles were much displeased with this conduct on the part of James and John. Jesus had to calm them. Gathering them close around him, he repeated that which he had often taught them:

"Ye know that the princes reign over the nations with force. The great impose their authority. But it shall not be so among you. But whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister. Let him be your slave, that one who would wish to be the first: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

◈ JESUS AT JERICHO ◈

Now the Master went toward Jericho. He was about to enter the city with his disciples when a great multitude of people came to meet him. And a blind man—he was called Bartimeus, that is, the son of Timeus—was begging as he sat at the side of the road. He asked why so great a crowd was there. And they answered him that it was because of the coming of Jesus of Nazareth. Immediately he began to cry out:

"Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!"

And Jesus cured that one too, as he had cured the others, while the people that witnessed the thing were singing praises to God.

And Jesus entered Jericho.

There was a Jew, called Zaccheus, a rich man and the chief among the publicans. And he sought to see the Master and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. That is why he ran before and climbed up into a sycamore tree, not far from where the crowd would pass.

When Jesus saw him perched up in his tree he said, as if he had always known him.

"Zaccheus, make haste and come down: thou art to receive me this day at thy house."

Zaccheus came down as quickly as possible and took the Saviour unto his house and received him joyfully.

"He goes to be a guest with a man that is a sinner!" cried the Jews, astonished.

But this despised publican was to show the purity of his heart.

After Jesus had rested a while, Zaccheus stood before him humbly and said:

"Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold."

Then, experiencing a profound joy, Jesus cried:

"This day is salvation come to this house. This man is a true son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

◆ THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS ◆

Now as they heard these things, and having learned from the disciples that their Master was on his way to Jerusalem, the crowd imagined that the Kingdom of God should immediately appear upon earth.

To correct this error on the part of the Jews, Jesus gave them this parable:

"A certain nobleman went into a far country to take possession of a kingdom. Before his departure he called his ten servants to him, gave them ten pounds, and said unto them, Make them to have value, until I come.

"Now this powerful man was detested. A message therefore was sent to warn him that upon his return he would not be allowed to reign over all the citizens. He came back, however, after taking possession of his kingdom. And immediately he called the servants to whom he

had entrusted money to be made fruitful. He was in a hurry to find out the result obtained by each one of them.

"The first one to come said, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

"Well done; thou art a good servant. Because thou hast been faithful in a small affair, have thou authority over ten cities." (For if thou wert honest in this, thou shalt be honest in that!)

"Another said, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.

"Very well! Thou shalt govern five cities.

"Another came and said, Lord, here is thy pound. I have kept it carefully in a napkin, for I feared thee because thou art a severe master: thou takest where thou hast not given, thou reapest where thou didst not sow.

"Thou wicked servant, thou pronouncest thine own sentence. Thou knewest that I was a severe master, taking what has not been given, reaping where nothing hath been sown. Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank? At my return I might have taken it out with interest!

"And this nobleman gave orders that the pound should be taken from the servant and given to him that knew how to gain ten. Now those which stood by did not fail to call his attention to the fact that this servant already had ten pounds. And here is his answer:

"I say unto you, verily, that unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him! As for mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me."

This parable appeared strange to all those who were

gathered round about Jesus. Some of them pretended that the Master meant to speak of Archelaus, king of Judea and son of Herod the Great. In spite of the hostility of the Jews, this prince when he went to Rome obtained investiture from Augustus. When he returned to Judea, he covered with honor and riches those Jews who defended his cause in his absence, and in a wicked manner put to death three thousand of his enemies.

Nobody understood that Jesus was prophesying concerning himself. Soon the Jews would cry, "We do not want this man to reign over us!" And the Son of man was to go and take possession of the Kingdom of his Father, from whence he should come to judge the just and the unjust. Then the disciples were to have their reward, in proportion to their works, according to the way they should have made fruitful the Good Word. And the Christ would reap where he had not sown, even in the field of sin. For it is he that saves that which was lost. As for the Pharisees, the men who held the faith in contempt, the enemies of God, they were to be banished to the somber empire of the dead.

◆ A FAREWELL MEAL ◆

After he had spoken in this manner, Jesus went on his way toward Bethany, where Lazarus whom he raised from the dead dwelt.

It was the sixth day before the Passover.

And, behold, a certain Simon, called the leper, was giving a feast in his honor. And Lazarus was among those seated at the table.

And Mary and Martha were there.

Martha was serving.

Mary thought only of the Saviour. Taking an alabaster box, she anointed his head with fragrant oil, spikenard that was very precious. Then she anointed his feet and wiped them with her hair.

The good odor of the perfume filled all the house.

But several disciples, among them Judas Iscariot who was to betray the Master, cried out:

"Why thus waste this perfume? It could be sold for more than three hundred pence and given to the poor!"

Much Judas cared about the poor! He was a robber. But as he kept the purse he was anxious to put into it such a sum of money.

Then said Jesus:

"Let this woman alone. Why trouble her? She hath wrought a good deed. For ye have the poor always with you, and ye may help them to your heart's content. But me ye have not always. This woman hath done what she could: she hath anointed my body in advance for my burial.

"Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world her act shall be told and men shall praise her memory."

Meanwhile a great multitude of Jews, when they knew that Jesus was in Bethany, hurried out from Jerusalem to see him. Likewise they wished to see Lazarus, whom the Master had raised from the dead.

Also the chief priest of the Temple, the doctors of the law, and the principal servants of the Temple were resolved to put Lazarus to death. For they thought that as Lazarus had returned from the kingdom of shadows he would win the Jews away from them and would give them a new reason for believing on Jesus.

Now in the second year of the reign of Darius, in the eighth month, came the word of the Lord unto the prophet Zechariah, son of Barachiah, son of Iddo.

And Zechariah the prophet said unto Israel, in the name of the Lord:

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout with joy, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, thy king cometh unto thee: he is just and a conqueror, lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass; and he shall speak peace to the nations." [1]

And more than seven centuries before that in the days of Ozias, Joathan, Achaz, and Ezechias, kings of Judah, the word of the Lord was addressed to Isaiah, son of Amos.

And Isaiah the prophet said unto Israel, in the name of the Lord:

"For he shall grow up before the Lord as a tender plant and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned

[1] Zechariah, ix.

every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

"He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

"And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

"Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

"He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

"Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." [1]

Thus Isaiah the prophet spoke unto Israel, in the name of the Lord.

[1] Isaiah, liii.

V

HOLY WEEK

◈ TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM ◈

The next day after Simon the leper entertained him in his house, Jesus, leaving Bethany, went up to Jerusalem.

As he was approaching the Mount of Olives not far from Bethphage, he took two of his disciples aside and said unto them:

"Go into the village which is before you. And as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her, whereon never man sat. Loose them and bring them to me.

"If any one ask why do ye loose them, thus shall ye say unto him: The Lord hath need of them. Straightway they will allow you to bring them."

The disciples did what the Master had commanded them. And, behold, between two roads, they found an ass and her foal tied to the door of a house. As they were loosing them, the owner came and asked them:

"By what right do ye loose this foal?"

"The Lord hath need of him," they answered.

And they let them go. Then they cast their garments on the foal, and when they brought him to Jesus the Saviour sat upon him. As Jesus and all his disciples went slowly down the slopes of the Mount of Olives, the Jews

from Jerusalem came in great numbers to meet them; others waved palm branches, crying:

"Hosanna! Hosanna!"

Others spread their garments upon the ground and kissed the hem of the robe of the Saviour as he passed. And all the disciples, transported with joy, sang with full voices the glory of God:

"Hosanna! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel!

"Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, which cometh.

"Blessed be the Son of David! Peace and glory in the highest Heavens!"

Those who had seen Lazarus come back from the dead bare record of the miracle. And this added to the enthusiasm of the crowd.

Now all this took place that there might be fulfilled the word of Zechariah the prophet. But the disciples did not understand it at first; it was only later, when Jesus was glorified, that they were to remember that all these things were written and that they had happened with him as they were written.

Meanwhile mingled with the crowd there were several Pharisees. They approached Jesus and said unto him:

"Master, tell thy disciples to be silent."

The enthusiasm of the people alarmed them. But Jesus gave them this amazing answer:

"If these should hold their peace, I say unto you, the stones would immediately cry out."

For the meaning of his mission was obvious to all except these men who were wilfully blind!

The triumphal procession arrived before the gates of Jerusalem. Jesus halted for a few moments and wept

over this city where destiny had decreed that he should suffer unto death for the redemption of the world.

"Ah!" he cried, "if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes.

"For the days shall come upon thee that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee; they shall compass thee round and keep thee in on every side. And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee. And they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." (Because thou hast not believed on the Son of man.)

Then he entered the city, and his arrival made a sensation. Men came out to the thresholds of their doors, merchants emerged running from the backs of their shops, laborers quit their work, and women leaned over their balconies. Everybody wanted to see. Everybody was astonished. Who was this man now acclaimed by the populace?

Those who knew answered:

"This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee."

And all joined in the procession.

The Pharisees, in consternation, said among themselves:

"Perceive ye how we prevail nothing? The world is gone after him."

Thus Jesus entered Jerusalem.

Then he went up to the Temple. The usual crowd was swarming in the court of the Gentiles: money changers, sellers of drinks crying their wares, venders of doves and sheep, children, beggers, babblers. This was a scandal that had been going on for a long time in the house of the Lord.

After surveying it all, Jesus went back into the city,

filled with an infinite sadness. Twilight was falling. There were so many pilgrims that the apostles had not been able to find a shelter for the night. The Lord and his followers went out of Jerusalem, and retracing their footsteps established themselves on the Mount of Olives.

◆ THE BARREN FIG TREE ◆
◆ THOSE THAT SOLD IN THE TEMPLE ◆

On the morrow, as Jesus was returning to Jerusalem, he was hungry. In a neighboring field there stood a fig tree covered with leaves. When Jesus came to it he found no fruit, for the time of figs was not yet. Then he said to the fig tree:

"No man eat fruit of thee hereafter, and no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever."

Straightway the fig tree withered.

The apostles were greatly surprised. It escaped them that the tree was only a symbol. In the fig tree Jesus saw the Jewish nation. It was sterile and mistaken, like this bad tree, the leaves of which (contrary to what one sees in good fig trees) had grown before the figs. The curse was to be upon this nation of hypocrites that was empty of faith, in spite of the mummeries of its priests and its chiefs.

As soon as he arrived in the Holy City, the Master went to the Temple. He had resolved to drive out once more the crowd of purveyors of bloody sacrifices whom be detested.

Armed with a whip made of little cords he drove out all these people. Once again he opposed those who carried a profane object into these courts.

"Is it not written," said he, recalling the words of

the Eternal unto Isaiah, "My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? But ye have made it a den of thieves!"

The blind and the lame appealed to him, and he healed them.

Then the children of the Temple surrounded him and cried:

"Hosanna to the Son of David!"

"Hearest thou what these children say?" asked the priests, the scribes, and the elders indignantly as they came swiftly, attracted by the noise.

"Yea," answered Jesus. Then he quoted to them this verse from a song of David:

"Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy of God."

The priests and the notables among the people retired in confusion. They deliberated together as to how to get rid of this despised Master, whose influence over the multitudes who admired his doctrine was increasing. But they knew not what to decide.

◈ ABGAR, KING OF EDESSA ◈

Now there were in the court of the Gentiles a certain number of Greeks. The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked if they could speak to Jesus. They had received a messenger from Abgar, king of Edessa, who was devoured with leprosy, and he brought to Jesus the following letter:

"Abgar, lord and prince of the city of Edessa, to Jesus, good Saviour living at Jerusalem.

"I have heard tell of thee and of the cures which thou

hast wrought without any drug or herb: thou makest the blind to see and the lame to walk; thou hast cleansed leprosy, thou dost cast out and drive away evil and wicked spirits. And those who, suffering from grave maladies, have lingered at death's door, thou dost make them new, and thou dost cause them to stand up; and those who are dead thou dost bring back and unto them thou givest back life.

"After hearing all these things, one after the other, I have judged that either thou must be God come from Heaven or else the Son of God.

"Therefore I implore thee to be pleased to take the trouble to come to me in order to heal me of the sickness with which I am tormented. I am assured that the Jews are angry against thee and that they wish to take thee by surprise in order to strike thee. I have here a little city, both honorable and clean, which in my opinion will suffice for thee and for me."[1]

Philip turned over the request of the Greeks to Andrew; then the two went together to Jesus. When they had laid before him the desire of the pagans, the Lord made them this reply:

"The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

In these words Jesus affirmed the purifying virtue of sacrifice. He compared himself to a seed which rots in the furrow in order to be born again and be multiplied. In accepting death, in offering himself as a sacrifice, he gained eternal life for all those who would believe on him, Jews or pagans won to the Gospel.

[1] Apocryphal text of the fifteenth century.

Meanwhile, touched by the faith of the king of Edessa, he answered him:

"Happy art thou, Abgar, to have believed on me without seeing me. For it is written of me that those who have seen me shall not believe, in order that those who have not seen me might believe and be saved.

"As touching thy prayer that I go to find thee, I must accomplish that for which I have been sent and after that return to him that sent me. When I go there I will send thee one of my disciples who will heal thee and will give thee life, thee and those belonging unto thee." [1]

Then he delivered unto the messengers of Abgar a napkin which he had placed upon his face and upon which was imprinted his likeness. Afterward this miraculous image became the protection of the city where no heretic, no pagan, no worshiper of idols, no Jew could live. When the barbarians were approaching Edessa, a child as pure and innocent as Jesus himself climbed upon the ramparts and read the letter of the Saviour to the king and lifted above his head the portrait of Jesus. Immediately the barbarians fled like women.[2]

◆ MY SOUL IS TROUBLED ◆

And Jesus said:

"If any man serve me, let him follow me: and where I am there he shall be also. For him will my Father honor."

At the thought of all he was to suffer, however, a cold chill went through his human flesh. He sighed:

"Now is my soul troubled. Shall I say: Father, save

[1] Apocryphal text of the fifteenth century.
[2] Legendary tradition.

me from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour!

"O Father! Glorify thy name!"

He inclined himself before the will of the Most High.

Then there came a voice from Heaven:

"I have both glorified it and will glorify it again."

Hearing that, some of the Jews cried:

"It thunders!"

And others:

"An angel spake to him!"

Then Jesus said unto them:

"This voice came not because of me but for your sakes."

Then he announced the defeat of the spirit of evil.

"Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

This he said, signifying what death he should die.

But the Jews did not understand that the Christ could die. Did not the Lord say, concerning the Messiah:

"My covenant will I not break; I will not deny the promises that came out of my lips.

"Once have I sworn it by my holy name, I will not lie unto David.

"His seed shall endure forever, and his throne shall last before me as long as the sun."[1]

The Jews retorted:

"The law teaches us that Christ abideth forever. How sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?"

Used to these questions, which proved the lack of understanding on the part of those that listened to him,

[1] Psalms, lxxxix.

Jesus, instead of replying directly, simply preached to them confidence and faith, because they were essential.

"Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you. For he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

"While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light." (In order that ye may enter into eternity.)

These things spake Jesus and did hide himself from the Jews as he did each evening by going away to the Mount of Olives.

◈ PROPHECY OF ISAIAH ◈

And, behold, in spite of the miracles that Jesus had done for them and in their presence, the Jews refused to believe on him. Thus was realized the word of the prophet Isaiah:

"Lord, who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?"

And had not the prophet Isaiah also said:

"In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the Temple.

"Above it stood the seraphims; each one had six wings: with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

"And they cried: Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory!

"The foundations of the edifice were shaken by their cries, and the Temple was filled with smoke.

"Then said I, Woe is me! I am undone! I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people

of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!

"Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from off the altar.

"And he laid it upon my mouth and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

"Also I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

"And he said, Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not.

"Ye see indeed, but perceive not.

"Make the heart of this people fat and make their ears heavy and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and convert, and be healed."[1]

Thus, blind in heart and mind, Israel could not believe on the word of Jesus and refused to recognize in him the arm of the Lord. Several of the chiefs among the Jews, however, gave him their confidence. But they kept their feelings to themselves because they feared that the Pharisees would drive them out of the synagogue. They preferred the honors of men to the glory of God!

It was for the benefit of all those who exhibited similar timidity that Jesus lifted up his voice and said:

"He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. He that seeth me, seeth not me, but seeth him that sent me.

[1] Isaiah, vi.

"I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

"And if any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not. I came not to judge the world but to save the world.

"He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

"For I have not spoken of myself" (for I have invented nothing). "The Father that sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting. Whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak."

◆ CONFUSION OF THE DOCTORS ◆

And in the morning, the Master and his disciples, following the Bethany road, were going to Jerusalem. Peter suddenly said to Jesus:

"Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away to the roots!"

"Verily I say unto you," answered Jesus to the disciples who were marveling, "have faith in God! If ye have faith and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done; for he that doubteth not at all in his heart and shall believe firmly, shall be answered in all his prayers."

To this lesson which had already been given them, Jesus added these precepts of humility and charity:

"When any one hath offended you, forgive him before

making your own prayer. Your Father which is in Heaven also will forgive you your trespasses.

"But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in Heaven forgive your trespasses."

When they had passed the gates of Jerusalem, the Master and his disciples went up to the Temple. Under the porches the crowd was waiting for him. There were among them the sick and a number of Jews who were eager to hear his word. He healed the sick and taught the others.

Then the chief priests, the doctors of the law, and the elders, who without doubt had come to spy upon him, approached and asked:

"By what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority?"

Jesus said unto them:

"Let me also ask of you one question. If ye answer me I will confess to you from whom I have my authority. Tell me: the baptism of John, was it from Heaven or of men?"

At these words the delegates of the Sanhedrim were troubled. They reasoned with themselves: "If we shall say, From Heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; the people will stone us, for they are persuaded that John was a prophet."

And as Jesus, a witness of their confusion, insisted upon knowing the answer, these foxes, taken in a trap, stammered:

"We do not know."

Cruel admission from the mouths of these powerful men, doctors of the law whose decisions had the weight of oracles!

Then Jesus said to them:

"Neither do I tell you by what authority I hold my power."

As they were wilfully blind in regard to John, so must they have been likewise concerning Jesus. To doubt the mission of one was to doubt the mission of the other.

And the Lord, rejoicing in their defeat, wished to confound them further. That is why he asked them:

"What think ye of this?

"A man had two sons. He ordered the first one, My son, go work to-day in my vineyard.

"The son answered, I will not go.

"But upon reflection he repented his disobedience of his father and took his tools and went away to the vineyard.

"And the father said likewise to the second son, My son, go work to-day in my vineyard.

"The second son answered, I go.

"But he went not.

"Which of the two did the will of his father?

"All cried with one voice, The first!

"Well!" continued Jesus, "verily I say unto you, the publicans and the harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness" (according as it is written in the law), "and ye believed him not. The publicans and the harlots believed him. Now have ye repented? No, ye continue in not believing in him."

The publicans and the harlots were like the first of the two sons of the man who owned the vineyard; the priests, the doctors of the law, the elders among the people, resembled the second son, who was a hypocrite!

"Hear more."

This time Jesus found inspiration in Isaiah the prophet:

"There was once a householder which planted a vineyard. When he had hedged it round about he digged a wine press in it, and built a tower and let it out to husbandmen. Then he set out on a journey to a far country.

"At the harvest time he sent his servants to the husbandmen to watch so that they might not rob him of his share of the grapes.

"Now the husbandmen took his servant and beat him and drove him away, giving him nothing.

"Another servant had a similar reception; the husbandmen handled him outrageously. They stoned him and beat his head and sent him away empty handed.

"A third servant was killed, and several others shared his fate.

"What shall I do? reflected the owner of the vineyard. He had an only son whom he cherished. He charged his son to see the husbandmen, thinking that they would respect his child. But the husbandmen reasoned among themselves, This is the heir, come let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.

"So they cast him out of the vineyard and killed him."

Jesus was silent for a moment. Then he asked:

"When the lord, therefore, of the vineyard cometh, what will he decide? He will miserably destroy those wicked men and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him his share of the fruit in their season."

"God forbid!" cried the Jews.

The fact was that these words of the Master would admit of no false interpretation. They knew then that

Jesus was speaking of the kingdom of Israel, the Temple and the doctors, wicked servants in the vineyard of the lord. Alas! these unfaithful servants were making ready to put to death the heir, the only Son of the Father, in order to silence him and keep the heritage in their hands. But the priests and the scribes and the elders thought that they were alone in this knowledge. The parable which Jesus borrowed from Isaiah bore witness of the fact that their criminal designs were known.

Besides, the Saviour said unto them further, looking them fixedly in the eye: "Did ye never read the Scriptures?"

And immediately he reminded them of the prophecy of the psalmist:

"The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner.

"This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes."

The priests and the Pharisees caught the meaning: they were the builders. Jesus rejected by them was to become the cornerstone of the Church.

"And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken," continued Jesus, "but on whomsoever it shall fall he shall be crushed.

"For this reason, I say unto you, the Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you and given to another people who will render the fruits of it unto the Lord."

◈ RENDER UNTO CÆSAR ◈ GOD IS NOT THE GOD OF THE DEAD ◈

The priests and the Pharisees were angered, and they would have laid hands on the Master if they had not feared the people. They withdrew, therefore, and while

continuing to watch Jesus from afar, they despatched some of their disciples with whom certain officers of Herod joined, that they might entangle him in his talk. They were sure that the Lord would compromise himself. Then, basing their denunciation upon the testimony of witnesses, they would be able to deliver him unto the magistrates and unto the power of the Roman governor.

Pretending themselves to be just men, these individuals approached the Master, and without appearing to do so they asked him insidious questions:

"Master, we know that thou art true. Neither carest thou for any man. Thou regardest not the person of men. Thou teachest the way of God in truth.

"We beg of thee to tell us, Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not?"

Jesus was not duped by their artifices.

"Hypocrites!" he said unto them, "why tempt ye me? Show me a piece of money."

The Herodians gave him a penny.

"Whose is this image and superscription?" demanded Jesus, pointing to the profile of the Roman emperor and to the Latin inscription that had been struck upon the coin.

"Cæsar's."

"Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

To Cæsar, tribute; to God, love.

Finding nothing to say further, before the people, concerning the Master's answer, the disciples of the priests and their acolytes withdrew and held their peace.

The same day, certain Sadducees who were enamored of the joys of earth, and who denied the resurrection

of the body, went to find Jesus. They brought to him these words of Moses:

"If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall come to her and take her to him to wife. And he shall give the name of his brother to the first born of the sons which she shall bear, in order that his name be not put out of Israel."[1]

"Now, Lord," they continued, "there were with us seven brethren. The first, when he had married a wife, died leaving no children. He left his wife to his brother. The second took her, but he died too, without children. Likewise with the third, then the others. Thus the seven brothers married the same woman, who in her turn died also.

"Tell us, therefore, whose wife shall she be at the hour of the resurrection?"

And Jesus answered:

"Ye do err. Ye know not the Scriptures, and ye know not the power of God.

"In this world men take wives, and wives husbands; but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. Neither can they die any more: for they are equal to the angels in Heaven, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

"But as touching the resurrection of the dead, Moses himself hath spoken. Have ye not read in the book how in the burning bush God spake unto him: I am the God of thy Father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?

[1] Deuteronomy, xxv.

"Now God is not the God of the dead. God is the God of the living, for all live unto him. Ye therefore do greatly err!"

At these words the people did not hide their admiration. Even several scribes could not keep from saying:

"Master, thou hast well said!"

As for the Sadducees, they durst not ask him any question at all.

◈ THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOR ◈

When the Pharisees learned that Jesus had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together to discuss the matter. Now one of the scribes, who had been present during the discussion between the Master and those men who denied the resurrection of the dead, was there. It was a doctor of the law, and he had approved of the answers that Jesus made. The Pharisees charged him to go and pose unto him certain further questions. They were always hoping to embarrass him.

Coming to the Saviour then, he asked:

"Master, which is the greatest commandment in the law?"

Jesus quoted the very words of Moses:

"Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.

"This is the first commandment," said Jesus. "The second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

"On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. There is none other greater than these."

The scribe said approvingly:

"Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God, and there is none other but he. And to love him with all our heart, and with all our understanding, and with all our soul, and with all our strength, and to love our neighbor as ourself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices upon the altar."

Touched by such wisdom, Jesus said to the scribe:

"Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God."

Meanwhile the Pharisees had approached. The Master took advantage of their coming in order to ask them:

"What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?"

"The son of David," they replied.

"How say the scribes," continued Jesus, "that Christ is the son of David, since David himself, inspired by the Holy Spirit, calls him, in the book of the Psalms, his Lord?

"The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I conquer thine enemies and make them thy footstool.

"Now if David then call him Lord, how is he his son?"

No man answered, but all listened with joy. And from that day forth no man durst ask him any more questions.

◈ WOE UNTO YOU, SCRIBES AND PHARISEES ◈

Then Jesus, speaking to the people and to his disciples, rebuked the scribes and the Pharisees in these terms:

"The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that

observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

"All their works they do for to be seen of men. Upon their heads and arms they wear broad phylacteries,[1] and upon their garments, longer borders than are worn by the other Jews.

"They love the uppermost rooms at the feasts and the chief seats in the synagogues. They love greetings in the markets and to be called of men, Rabbi! Rabbi!

"But be ye not called rabbi. For one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.

"And call no man your father from the earth, for one is your Father, which is in Heaven.

"Neither be ye called masters, for one is your Master, even Christ.

"But he that is greatest among you, let him also be the most humble. For whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased, and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."

Then addressing himself directly to the men of the Temple, he anathematized them:

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Ye close the Kingdom of Heaven unto men" (through your odious rigidity, which disgusts men with religion). "Ye enter not yourselves, and ye keep off those who would enter.

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye devour widows' houses" (in demanding sacrifices that are too costly). "And for a pretense ye make long prayer. Therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For

[1] Bands of parchment, which are covered with the maxims of the law.

ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte" (to convert one pagan), "and when he is converted, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves" (through your practices, you throw him like your own selves, and more than your own selves, into hell).

"Woe unto you, ye blind guides! Ye say, Whosoever shall swear by the Temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the Temple" (through the offering left upon the altar), "he shall keep his promise. Ye fools and blind! Which is greater, the gold or the Temple that sanctifieth gold?"

The priests lived on these offerings; that is why they said:

"Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty."

And Jesus cried scornfully:

"Ye fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?

"Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it and by the offerings thereon; and whoso shall swear by the Temple, sweareth by the Temple and by him that dwelleth therein. And he that shall swear by Heaven, sweareth by the throne of God and by him that sitteth thereon.

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law: judgment, mercy, and faith. The tithe ought ye to have paid, and not to leave the commandments of the law undone.

"Ye blind guides! Ye strain at a gnat and swallow a camel!

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For

ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

"Thou blind Pharisee! Cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, for ye are like unto whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto me, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because ye build the tombs of the prophets and garnish the sepulchers of the righteous; and say if we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

"Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are like the children of them which killed the prophets.

"Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"

And he recalled the word of the Eternal:

"Behold, I send unto you prophets, wise men, and scribes. And some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city; that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the Temple and the altar.

"Verily I say unto you," Jesus proclaimed, "all these things shall come upon this generation."

◈ THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM ◈

There were in the Temple treasuries for the gifts. And Jesus, seated not far from there, beheld the Jews who came to leave offerings. The rich brought magnificent presents. A poor woman, wearing the robes of a widow, came to put in two little pieces of money.

And Jesus said to his disciples:

"Verily I say unto you, this poor woman hath given more than all the others. They did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want cast in all that she had, even all her living."

The Master was leaving the Temple, when his disciples called his attention to the magnificence of the sanctuary:

"Master, see the beautiful stones and the grandeur of the buildings!"

They were dazzled, and they were also astonished that such richness was destined to disappear for the chastisement of the people of Israel. In the time when Micah the Morasthite was prophesying, in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, did he not declare in the name of the Lord of hosts:

"Zion shall be plowed as a field. Jerusalem shall become a heap of stones, and a high forest shall grow upon the mountain of the Temple." [1]

Now Jesus said unto the disciples:

"See ye not all these things?"

What did the grandeur and sumptuousness of the

[1] Micah, iii.

Temple matter to him? Was not the house of his Father in the Heavens?

"The days will come," he added, "in which there shall not be left one stone upon another, in these buildings. All shall be thrown down."

Evening was falling: the Master and his followers went out of the city to the Mount of Olives, where they halted. Before them was Jerusalem, which was dominated by the imposing mass of the Temple. Then Peter, James, John, and Andrew, troubled by the words of the Master, approached him and asked:

"Master, tell us when shall these things be? And what sign will there be when these things are about to come to pass, and what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of time?"

And Jesus answered in this way:

"Take heed that no man deceive you, for the day is coming when many shall come in my name saying, I am the Christ. Many Jews shall believe them, but ye shall not follow them. And ye shall hear of commotions and wars. See that ye be not troubled. All these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet."

And he also said unto them:

"And they shall see nation rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom. In different places there shall be famines, pestilences, earthquakes. And there shall be fearful disasters and great signs in the Heavens. But these are only the beginnings of sorrows.

"Now take heed to yourselves. For before all that shall arise, my enemies shall lay their hands on you; they shall persecute you; they shall deliver you unto the tribunals and synagogues; they shall flog you with

a whip of cords; they shall throw you into prison; they shall drag you before kings and governors; they shall have you put to death. All that shall be because of me, and in order that ye might testify of me before them.

"But take no thought what ye shall speak to your accusers: I shall put into your mouth an eloquence and a wisdom which they shall know not how to oppose. Speak according to your inspiration of the moment, for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.

"And at that time many shall be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. Brother shall betray brother to death, and the father the son; the children shall rise up against their parents and shall cause them to be put to death.

"Ye shall be betrayed by your fathers, by your mothers, by your brethren, by your kinsfolk, and by your friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death.

"And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.

"But there shall not an hair of your head perish" (for ye shall gain eternal life).

"In your patience possess ye your souls" (save it, make it worthy of the Kingdom of God).

"I have told you, many false prophets shall rise, and many of the Jews shall believe on them. And with iniquity growing, the charity of some shall become cold. But he that shall persevere unto the end shall be saved.

"And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations. And then shall the end come."

Now in the first year of the reign of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was set over

the realm of the Chaldeans, Daniel the prophet was visited by the archangel Gabriel:

And Gabriel said unto Daniel:

"Seventy weeks hath the Lord determined upon thy people and upon thy Holy City, to finish the transgression and to make an end of sins and to make reconciliation for iniquity and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy.

"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment given to the Jews by Cyrus, in the first year of his reign, to return to Jerusalem and to rebuild the city in the Temple, unto the coming of Christ, shall be seven weeks and three score and two weeks. The strong places and the walls shall be built again, but it shall happen in difficult and troublous times.

"And after three score and two weeks shall Messiah be put to death, but not for himself but for his people. Then there shall come a people with a chief. They shall destroy the city and the Temple. Also there shall be ruin in this invasion and unto the end of the war desolation shall last.

"Messiah shall confirm the covenant with many for one week. And in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifices and the oblation to cease. And upon the wing of abominations the destroyer shall come until the ruin that was determined shall be poured upon the desolate." [1]

And Jesus, continuing to speak to his disciples, said unto them:

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, and the abomination of desolation, spoken of by

[1] Daniel, ix.

Daniel the prophet, in the holy place, let him that readeth understand! Know that ruin is at hand.

"Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains; let him which is on the housetop take care not to stop to carry away anything from his house; and let him that is in the field not turn back to the city for to take up his garments, for these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

"But woe unto women that are with child and to them that give suck.

"And pray ye that your flight be not in winter, or on the Sabbath day" (when it is forbidden to set out on a journey).

"For then shall be tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world, nor hath ever been seen. There shall be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people.

"The inhabitants shall fall by the edge of the sword, or shall be led away captive into all nations. Jerusalem shall be trodden down under foot of the pagans, until the times of the nations be fulfilled.

"And if the Lord shorten not these days, none shall escape; but for the elects' sake he shall shorten the days."

◈ THE END OF THE WORLD ◈

Then the Master told them what men should see after the destruction of Jerusalem. He foretold his reign, the extermination of the Jewish people, the end of the world.

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days," said he, "there shall be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars. The sun shall be darkened, the light of the

moon shall be put out, the stars shall fall down from Heaven, the sea and the waves shall make a great noise. On earth, while waiting upon these things which shall happen unto all, men, in consternation and not knowing where to seek a refuge, shall die of fear. For the powers of the Heavens shall be shaken.

"Then the sign of the Son of man shall appear in the Heavens. All the tribes of the earth shall mourn and shall beat their breasts. And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

"He shall send his angels with a great sound of trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of Heaven to the other.

"When these things begin to be manifest, then look up and lift up your heads: for your redemption draweth nigh.

"Behold the fig tree and all the other trees," he continued. "When their branches are yet tender and are putting forth leaves, ye know that summer is near.

"Thus when ye see all these things, know ye that the Kingdom of God is at hand, even at the doors.

"Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things shall be fulfilled.

"Heaven and earth shall pass away; my words shall not pass away."

These predictions were to be realized in every point, at least in regard to Jerusalem. Jesus likened all peoples unto the people of Israel; he assigned unto them a common fate, but without fixing the hour of judgment. It was of this judgment that he said:

"But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in Heaven, not the Son: my Father alone knoweth it.

"Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is to come.

"When a man departs on a journey he leaves his house in the care of his servants; he gives to every man his work and doth command the porter to watch.

"Watch ye therefore, for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh. Shall it be at even, at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning? Watch lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.

"Take heed lest that day surprise you suddenly when ye are heavy with eating, with wine, and with the daily cares of life. For it shall fall like a net upon all those that inhabit the face of the earth.

"Watch and pray unceasingly, that ye may be found worthy to escape all those things which should come, worthy to appear before the Son of man."

◈ THE WISE VIRGINS AND THE FOOLISH VIRGINS ◈

Inspired by the ceremony of marriage, Jesus gave a new parable to his disciples in order to urge them to keep themselves constantly ready to receive the Son of man.

When the bridegroom, at evening, left his house to go to the house of the bride, ten virgins chosen by her went before him with lighted lamps.

"The Kingdom of Heaven," said Jesus, "shall be likened unto ten virgins which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

"Five of them were wise and five were foolish.

"Now the foolish virgins neglected to take oil with them; the wise, on the contrary, took oil in their vessels.

"While the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept.

"But at midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom. Go ye out to meet him.

"Then the virgins arose to fill their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out.

"The wise virgins answered, We fear that we shall not have enough for us and for you. Buy some of the merchants.

"While the foolish virgins went to buy of the merchants, the bridegroom came. The wise virgins went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut.

"On their return, the foolish virgins cried, Lord! Lord! open to us.

"The bridegroom answered, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

"Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh," concluded Jesus.

◆ THE LAST JUDGMENT ◆

Then he talked to them again about the last judgment.

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.

"And before him shall be gathered all nations. And he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

"Then shall the King say unto them on his right

hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father; inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

"For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

"Lord, shall the righteous say, when saw we thee an hungered? When have we fed thee? When have we given thee to drink, to quench thy thirst?

"We do not remember to have taken thee in, for we have never known thee without a shelter.

"When did we clothe thee? We remember not seeing thee naked.

"When have we seen thee sick or in prison? And when have we visited thee?

"And the King shall answer, Verily, verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren—unto the humblest of men—ye have done it unto me.

"He shall say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed! Go into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels!

"For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; a stranger, without shelter, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and ye visited me not; in prison, and ye came not unto me.

"Lord! shall they answer, in their turn, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or without shelter, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

"Then shall he answer them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these among my brethren, ye did it not to me.

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

◈ THE THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER ◈

When Jesus had finished saying these things he pondered for a short while. The restatement of the judgment of the righteous and the wicked had led his thoughts to his own approaching end. He had only a few hours more to spend in the midst of his disciples. He said to them:

"Ye know that after two days the Passover will be celebrated. Then the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified."

While Jesus was speaking, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders were holding a secret assembly in the palace of Caiaphas the High Priest, in order to consult together that they might take him by subtility and kill him.

Fearing the people, they agreed to wait until after the feast.

But Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was one of the twelve.

Instead of following the Master into his retreat on the Mount of Olives, Judas went his way and found the scribes and the guardians of the Temple. When he went in to where the chief priests were, he proposed to them that he should deliver his Master unto them. They listened with joy.

"I will deliver him unto you, but what will ye give me?" he demanded.

They answered him:

"Thirty pieces of silver."

And Judas promised to deliver Jesus as soon as an

opportunity came when he could do it without making an uproar among the people.

◈ THE PASSOVER ◈

And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, commanding them to establish the Feast of the Passover, which was to be celebrated from age to age. It was to be in memory of the captivity of the Jewish people, of the flight during the night, of the passage of the Red Sea, of the hand of the Lord upon the houses of the Egyptians.

"For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night," saith the Lord, "and will smite all the first born in the land of Egypt, and I will smite all the first born of man and beast, and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment. I will pass over your houses, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you. I am the Lord."

That is why on the evening of the fourteenth day of Nizan the symbolic lamb shall be eaten in the families with bitter herbs and unleavened bread.

For the Lord said unto Moses and Aaron, in the land of Egypt:

"This month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you.

"Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take a lamb or a kid, for an house—for a family—a lamb or a kid for an house.

"And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next unto his house take it according to the number of souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb.

"Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep or from the goats.

"And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month. And the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.

"And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.

"And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire. Ye shall eat it with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs.

"Eat not of it raw nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire, his head with his legs and with the purtenance thereof.

"And ye shall let nothing of it remain. And that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire." [1]

Thus spake the Lord.

Since then Israel celebrated the Passover. The lamb was there as a sacrifice offered to the angel which slayeth, who passed by the doors of the Jews, for they were marked with blood; while he slew all the first born of both man and beast; the unleavened bread was there in memory of the bread eaten by Israel during the hurried flight when they were coming out of the land of Egypt, bread which the Jews did not have time to let rise; and the bitter herbs were there as a symbol of the sufferings of Israel in bondage.

[1] Exodus, xii–xiii.

◈ THE LAST SUPPER ◈

Now on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread —Holy Thursday—the apostles came to Jesus and asked him:

"Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the Passover?"

"Go to Jerusalem," he said unto Peter and John. "On entering the city ye shall meet a man bearing a pitcher of water on his shoulder. Follow him. And wheresoever he shall go in, enter with him and say to the goodman of the house, Our Master saith that he will keep the Passover at thy house, for his time is at hand. Where can he eat with his disciples?

"He will show you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us."

Peter and John, obeying, found all things as he had said unto them, and they prepared the Passover according to the law. In the evening, the Master went to Jerusalem to the house which Peter and John indicated to him. And when the hour was come he sat down at table with the twelve. John, the beloved, was seated at his right.

Upon the table was placed the paschal lamb, the unleavened bread, the bitter herbs and fruits stewed in vinegar and seasoned with spices which gave them a color like the red of bricks. This was in memory of the mortar with which the Jews, during their bondage in the land of Egypt, built the city of Rameses. And Jesus said to his disciples:

"With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I say unto you, I will not any

more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God."

He took a goblet of wine mingled with water and rose:

"Blessed be the Lord which hath created the fruit of the vine."

He moistened his lips and passed the cup to the apostles:

"Take and drink, for I say unto you, I shall not any more drink the juice of the fruit of the vine until that day when I shall drink again with you in the Kingdom of God."

Knowing that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

Already Satan had put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him. But knowing that the father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God and went to God, Jesus wanted to give to his disciples a final lesson of humility and a last proof of his love. He left the table, laid aside his garment, and girded himself with a towel, in conformity to the ordinances of the Lord, spoken to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt. After that he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with a towel wherewith he was girded.

"Lord!" cried Simon Peter, "dost thou wash my feet?"

"What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

Peter protested:

"No, thou shalt never wash my feet!"

"If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me."

Peter would have no place in the Kingdom of God unless he were purified, sanctified.

Then said Peter:

"Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!"

And Jesus:

"He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all!"

He which is washed clean of his sins needs only to make himself clean of the least of his faults.

Now Jesus knew that Judas should betray him. That is why he said:

"Ye are not all clean."

When he had washed their feet and wiped them he took his garments and took again his place at table.

"Know ye what I have done? Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him."

They could well be humble one with the other, when he, whom the Father had sent, humbled himself before them!

"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

Then, thinking of the presence of the traitor among the apostles:

"I speak not of you all. I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture must be fulfilled: he that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me."

For David said:

"Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." [1]

"Now I tell you," added Jesus, "before it come, that when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he."

This was in order that the betrayal on the part of one might not bring doubt to the rest.

Jesus was silent. He was troubled in spirit. But the apostles continued to eat. Had they not heard the frightful accusations the Master had made?

"Verily, verily, I say unto you," said Jesus, "one of you which eateth with me shall betray me."

The apostles looked at one another. Of whom was the Master speaking?

"Is it I, Lord?" demanded each one, in turn.

Jesus answered:

"He that shall betray me is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish."

Then:

"The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him. But woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! Good were it for that man if he had never been born!"

Judas leaned toward the Lord.

"Master, is it I?"

"Thou hast said."

Then Jesus took bread and gave thanks unto God, and brake and gave it to the disciples.

"This is my body which is given for you: take and eat, in remembrance of me."

And the last goblet remained to be emptied. Jesus rose, gave thanks, and held it out to the apostles.

[1] Psalms, xli.

Moses, sealing the covenant of the Lord with Israel, had sprinkled upon the people the blood of young bullocks. Jesus was bringing a new covenant.

"This is the cup of the new covenant. Drink ye all of it, for this is my blood, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

And thus, with the bread and the wine, Jesus abolished sacrifices and oblations, as Daniel the prophet had foretold.

Now John was leaning on the bosom of Jesus. Of all the disciples it was he whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter beckoned to him that he should ask the Master the name of him that should betray him. For Peter was slow of mind and had not ceased meditating upon the prophecy of the Lord.

And Jesus answered John who questioned him:

"He it is, to whom I shall give a sop of bread."

And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.

When Judas had eaten of the bread, Satan entered into him; in other words, the thought of the crime possessed him utterly.

That is why Jesus said to him:

"That thou doest, do quickly!"

No man at the table understood the meaning of his words. For some of them thought, because Judas had the purse of the group, that Jesus had said unto him that he should buy those things that were needed against the feast, or that he should give alms to the poor.

Then Judas went out and plunged into the night.

When the traitor was gone out of the room Jesus cried:

"Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified

in him. If God is glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself. And this glory shall soon come."

For he knew that Judas was working for his downfall, and that he should be lifted up, not for himself, but for his people.

Then he said to the disciples, with his heart full of love:

"Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me; and as I said unto the Jews"—during the Feast of the Tabernacles—"whither I go, ye cannot come.

"And behold a new commandment I give unto you: that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

Simon Peter, however, asked:

"Lord, whither goest thou?"

"Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards."

Peter was to sin again; he was not at all ready to enter the Kingdom of God: his ministry and his crucifixion would win him reunion with his Master.

But Peter knew none of that.

"Master," said he, "why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. With thee I am ready to go both to prison and to death."

"Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee: The cock shall not crow twice, till thou hast denied me thrice."

And as the apostles were disputing among themselves over which was the greatest among them, the Master recalled to them what he had already said under similar circumstances:

"The kings exercise lordship and have themselves called benefactors"—high praise indeed.

"But ye shall not be so. Let the greatest among you be like the most humble and let him that is chief be like him that doth obey.

"Which is the master, he that sitteth at table, or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at table? But I am among you as he that serveth."

Had he not shown humility unto washing their feet, like a slave?

All shall be equal in the Kingdom of God. For Jesus said:

"Ye have remained faithful in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

And, speaking to Simon Peter:

"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat" (to separate his grain from that of God). "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not. When thou art converted" (when thy faith shall be firm forever), "strengthen thy brethren."

After this Jesus asked:

"When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything?"

"Nothing!"

"Now he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip; and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.

"For I say unto you that the word that was revealed to Isaiah the prophet must yet be accomplished: And he

was reckoned among the transgressors. All that was foretold of me shall be accomplished."

The time of his sacrifice was come, and likewise the time when the apostles must set out to fight the good fight. Let them be provisioned with courage, armed with faith.

The apostles, persuaded that the Master was advising them to take the sword against their enemies, answered:

"Lord, we have two swords."

"It is enough," said Jesus, who fought violence with gentleness!

The apostles were troubled. Jesus reassured them:

"Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me.

"In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you."

They would not have been cradled in the hope of entering there!

"I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also.

"And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know."

Thomas observed:

"Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?"

Jesus answered him:

"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also. And from henceforth ye know him and have seen him."

If instead of taking him for the first among the prophets the apostles had considered him to be the Son of God, they would have known his Father in him. And

now they were contemplating the Father, for the Son had begun to die; he had begun to be no longer a man, but had begun to return to God. But the apostles had always the same difficulty in understanding the real meaning of the words of Jesus. That was why Philip said:

"Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us."

Then, with sadness and amazement, Jesus replied:

"Have I been so long time with you, and yet thou hast not known me?"

So much blindness disturbed him.

"Philip," said he, "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father, and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?

"Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?

"The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

"Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me. Or else believe me for the very works' sake.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

After he had exhorted them to believe in him, assuring them, as he had done before, of the high virtue which conferred their faith upon them—for all is possible to him that believeth in his heart—he comforted them further by giving them the promise that he would not abandon them.

"If ye love me, keep my commandments.

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter—the Holy Spirit—that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him. But ye know him, for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you.

"I will not leave you comfortless. I will come to you.

"Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me. Because I live, ye shall live also."

As he was to live after ceasing to be present in the flesh, they were to live an eternal life.

"At that day, ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

"He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. And he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him and will manifest myself to him."

Judas—not Iscariot, the one that went out to commit his crime, but the cousin of Jesus—asked this question:

"Master, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us and not unto the world?"

But Jesus continued:

"If a man love me, he will keep my words" (he will follow the teachings of Jesus). "And my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him.

"He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings.

"And the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

"These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy

Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.

"Let not your heart be troubled. Neither let it be afraid.

"Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away and come again unto you.

"If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father, for my Father is greater than I."

He was able to do more for them.

"And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe."

For how could they not believe in the divinity of one who had predicted and accepted all?

"Hereafter I will not talk much with you, for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do."

Satan was the prince of this world who was coming. It was he that was directing Judas. He had nothing in Jesus, who was without sin, but he was coming because the righteous must give his life for the wicked. And Jesus inclined with love before the will of his Father, who had commanded him.

For the Lord said unto Israel through the mouth of Isaiah the prophet:

"He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken." [1]

"Arise, let us go hence," said Jesus.

[1] Isaiah, liii.

When they arose, the apostles chanted a Psalm of David:

"I love the Lord! He hath heard my voice and my supplications; he hath inclined his ear unto me. I will call upon him as long as I live.

"The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me; I found trouble and sorrow.

"Then called I upon the name of the Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul!

"Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.

"The Lord preserveth the simple.

"I was brought low, and he helped me.

"Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.

"For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.

"I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.

"I believed, therefore have I spoken.

"I was greatly afflicted. I said in my haste, All men are liars.

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?

"I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord.

"I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

"O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.

"I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving and will call upon the name of the Lord.

"I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people. In the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem.

"Praise ye the Lord!" [1]

After they had sung they went out toward the Mount of Olives.

◈ THE LORD'S VINEYARD ◈

And as they went their way, they passed by a vineyard. The night was clear, and it was about eleven o'clock. Jesus pointed to the foliage, and according to his custom he made a comparison:

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away. And every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

"Now ye are clean through the word, ye are purified by the word of truth, which I have spoken unto you.

"Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

"I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. Without me ye can do nothing.

"If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

"If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

[1] Psalms, cxvi.

"As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.

"These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

"This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you."

They must love each other unto death, even as he himself gave his life for them and for all men!

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends," said Jesus.

He added:

"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

Then he confirmed them in their priestly ministry:

"Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth. But I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain;

"That whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

"These things I command you, that ye love one another."

To Jesus that was the supreme commandment. Was not love the source and the sum of all the virtues, since it determined all sacrifices and expressed all faith?

◈ PERSECUTION AND JOY ◈

But, alas! The apostles were not to find only love in this world. Persecution awaited them. The Master had already told them so, and he would repeat it again. And he was also about to comfort them with a promise of a Heavenly reward:

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

"If ye were of the world" (if ye belonged to the multitude of princes, notables, scribes, doctors, Pharisees, merchants, false followers, and doubters; if ye belonged to the multitude of men who place power and wealth above the love of God) "the world would love his own. But because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

"Remember the word that I said unto you: The servant is not greater than his Lord."

That which the Master had endured, the servants should endure also!

"If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

"But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me."

They scorned his mission, and likewise they scorned his Father!

"If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin.

"He that hateth me hateth my Father also.

"If I had not done among them the works which none

other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.

"But this cometh to pass, that the word—of David—might be fulfilled that is written in their law: They hated me without a cause.

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.

"And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

"These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.

"They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

"And these things will they do unto you because they have not known the Father nor me.

"But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

"But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart."

It was good, however, that he warned them, since it was necessary that he be lifted up above the world.

"Nevertheless," he continued, "I tell you the truth. It is expedient for you that I go away. For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you. But if I depart, I will send him unto you.

"And when he is come he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

"Of sin, because they believe not on me.

"Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more.

"Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."

Had not Satan been cast out of Heaven like a flash of lightning?

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."

As he shall be speaking in the name of God, nothing shall be hidden from him.

"He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you."

And he repeated:

"A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father."

And that meant that they would see him no more because he was to go down into the grave, but that they were to see him again after his resurrection, and in the bosom of his Father when they should join him in the Kingdom of God.

The words of the Master filled the disciples with a strange unrest. As they went on their way they had formed little groups. And they questioned each other in a low voice:

"What does he mean?"

"What is yet a little while?"

This conversation could not escape the attention of Jesus. He called his disciples:

"Ye seek the meaning of my words."

He said nothing in explanation. But he did his best to calm their fears:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

"A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.

"And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

"And in that day ye shall ask me nothing."

They then also should have accomplished the labor of love. Their sorrow, their martyrdom, should have given birth to faith in the world. He would receive them in the Kingdom of Heaven. Then they would ask no more questions, all would be revealed, and they would know perfect joy.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

"Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

After the return unto his Father, Jesus would be the intercessor. All that should be asked of the Father in the name of the Son, the Father would give, for the Son would be one with the Father.

"These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs," said the Saviour, "but the time cometh when I shall no

more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father."

It would no longer be necessary for him to speak to them of his Father through figures and similes, since he was to return unto him. The Spirit of truth who would come unto them would be the very expression of his Father, and they were to know him directly.

"At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you, for that would be useless. My Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me and have believed that I came out from God.

"I came forth from the Father and am come into the world: again I leave the world and go to the Father."

Suddenly they realized the divinity of Jesus. And the disciples cried out:

"Lo, now speakest thou plainly and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God."

"Do ye now believe?" said Jesus. "Behold the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

"These things have I spoken unto you that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world!"

And they, through him, would be conquerors!

◈ FATHER, THE HOUR IS COME ◈

And so spake Jesus. Then when the apostles had scattered to discuss his words, he lifted up his eyes to Heaven and said this prayer to God:

"Father, the hour is come! Glorify thy Son"—lift him up—"that thy Son may glorify thee"—by his ascension—"and as thou hast given him power over all flesh"—over all men—"he giveth eternal life to as many as thou hast given him"—to my disciples and to all that have believed on me!

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

"And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."

He said also for his disciples:

"I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word." They have believed on thee. They also believed on thy Son and they keep the teaching that I brought them in thy name.

"Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

"For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

"I pray for them: I pray not for the world." (I do not pray for the debauched, the false followers, the impious.) "I pray for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

"And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me"—keep them under thy holy dominion, that they may be faithful to thee—"that they may be one, as we are"—and share our glory.

"While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name"—in thy faith. "Those that thou gavest me, I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition"—Judas—"that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

"And now I come to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

"I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world!

"I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world; they are not of the world any more than I am; but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil"—when I shall no longer be with them.

"Sanctify them through thy truth. Thy word is truth." To believe on thy word will sanctify them.

"As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

"And for their sakes I sanctify myself"—for them I lay down my life—"that they also might be sanctified through the truth."

For the sacrifice of the Master made sure the triumph of his servants.

After praying to the Father for himself and for his friends, Jesus prayed for the future members of his church:

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

"And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one—I in them and thou in me. That they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me"—the disciples and all the faithful that come to God through their mediation—"be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

"O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee; but I have known thee, and these"—the disciples and the faithful—"have known that thou hast sent me"—they recognize me as the Christ.

"And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."

Thus he associated all his own with the love and the glory of God.

At this moment the disciples were crossing the Cedron. Jesus when he rejoined them, addressed unto them this warning:

"All ye shall be offended because of me this night."

And he reminded them of the words of the Lord unto Zechariah the prophet:

"I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad."

"But," he added quickly, "after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee."

"Though all men shall be offended because of thee," said Peter, "yet will I never be offended."

Peter said it in good faith, but Jesus knew that he presumed upon his strength. Therefore he repeated what he had said to him several hours before:

"Verily, this night, before the cock crow twice thou shalt deny me thrice."

Peter protested vigorously:

"Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee!"

All the apostles said the same thing, for they loved the Saviour, and their hearts revolted against the idea that they could abandon him and withhold from him their love.

And all the time the moment was approaching when the word of Jesus was to be fulfilled.

◈ THE NIGHT IN GETHSEMANE ◈

The discussion continued until Jesus and his disciples arrived on the Mount of Olives. They went into a garden where there was an olive press. And the place was called Gethsemane.

Judas had often spent the night with his Master and the apostles in this place; therefore he knew that Jesus

would withdraw there. By and by he would be able to guide those that would come to arrest his Lord.

The hour of the traitor was about to sound, and Jesus needed to meditate. He said unto his disciples:

"Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. Pray that ye enter not into temptation."

He called Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, James and John, and went with them away—about a stone's throw.

A frightful agony seized upon him; the chill of fear trembled in his mortal flesh.

"Alas!" he said unto his chosen friends, "my soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death."

He begged them not to leave him alone and to watch with him.

Peter, James, and John lay down at the foot of an olive tree. And he went a little further and fell on his face and prayed, saying:

"Abba, Father, take away this cup from me."

The serenity of the night lay over the city and the surrounding country.

When he arose, Jesus saw that his disciples had fallen asleep.

"Simon, sleepest thou?" he said reproachfully unto Peter.

How could he that was to be the head of the Church yield to sleep at such a moment?

The Master realized that he was abandoned. His sorrow was very heavy. Again he knelt down and implored the pity of his Father:

"Abba, Father," he repeated, "take this cup from me!"

The supreme trial had begun.
Like David, he cried:
"Lord, in thee do I seek my safety.
"O Lord! thou art my shield.
"Answer me from the top of my holy mountain.
"Behold, I am like a broken vessel.
"Wipe away my tears with thine own hand.
"I am trembling in my bones.
"In my torment I wander here and there.
"All my thoughts are before thee.
"Heal my soul." *

Although he was the Son—because he was the son—he must obey. His suffering would gain eternal salvation to all those who do the divine will.

"Not what I will, but what thou wilt, be done."

Coming back to his sleeping disciples, he made them ashamed of their indifference:

"What, could ye not watch with me one hour?"

And, thinking of the sorrowful struggle which was beginning in his own soul, he added:

"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

He went away again the second time. Again his prayer went up toward God:

"O Lord, until when shall my soul be troubled?" * he said, with the psalmist.

And his pleading was renewed:

"Abba, Father, take away from me this cup!"

His heart burned within him. With the return of submission, however, his spirit became calm.

"O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done!"

He returned to his disciples, but Peter, James, and John said words that meant nothing, for their eyes were heavy with sleep, and they knew not what they were saying.

And for the third time, Jesus, leaving them, went and prostrated himself upon the ground:

"Abba, Father, take away from me this cup!"

He knew the depths of agony, and the sound of his prayer was very soft upon his lips, like the slow breathing of a dying man.

And his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down his face. And it blinded him and coagulated in the hollows of his cheeks, stained the hair of his beard, and fell upon the dusty ground.

And, behold, a glow came down from Heaven, an angel with rose and green wings, clothed in a robe woven of the night and the stars. He came to Jesus, lifted him up, and fortified him in his soul.

Then, in a transport, Jesus radiated his joy until it was like an incense before his Father. For the Father would not deliver the soul of a dove unto wild beasts. Come what might, his triumph and eternal life were assured.

The hymn of thanksgiving for a victory, the words of which came from David, was upon his lips:

"The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!

"Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips.

"For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness.

"Thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head.

"He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever.

"His glory is great, for thou hast helped him. Honor and majesty hast thou laid upon him.

"For thou hast made him most blessed forever: thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance.

"For the king trusteth in the Lord, and through the mercy of the Most High he shall not be moved." [1]

When he had given thanks unto God, Jesus went back to his disciples, who were still sleeping. He said to them:

"Enough of sleep and rest. The hour has come. The Son of man is to be delivered into the hands of the wicked. Rise! Let us go! He is at hand that doth betray me."

◈ THE KISS OF JUDAS ◈

He was coming.

Jesus was still speaking when there appeared a troop of men armed with swords and clubs. Certain of them bore lanterns and torches. Some Roman legionaries could be distinguished, on account of their uniforms. And all came as representatives of the pontiffs, scribes, Pharisees, and elders.

At the head of the procession was Judas, one of the twelve.

Jesus, who knew all that was to happen, came forward to meet them.

Now Judas, the traitor, had said unto those whom he was leading:

"He whom I shall kiss, that is he. Take him away by force."

[1] Psalms, xxi.

He straightway went up to Jesus. But the Lord, appearing not to notice him, asked:

"Whom seek ye?"

Some one replied:

"Jesus of Nazareth."

"I am he!" said Jesus.

When he had spoken these simple words, "I am he," they all started, with a backward movement. And they fell to the ground as if struck by lightning.

But Jesus repeated his question:

"Whom seek ye?"

Again some one murmured:

"Jesus of Nazareth."

"I have told you, I am he!" repeated Jesus. And when the armed men were about to take the disciples, he added:

"If it is I whom ye seek, let those men go."

Thus was accomplished his word: "Father, of them which thou gavest me I have lost none."

At this moment, seeing that all were holding back, Judas approached Jesus.

"Master," said he, "I salute thee." And he kissed him.

Jesus said unto him sadly:

"It is for this that thou art come! Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?"

Already the soldiers had laid hands upon the Lord. Several of his disciples placed themselves beside him. They had swords and proposed to Jesus that they should use them to strike his enemies. Simon Peter, without waiting for his consent, smote the servant of the High Priest, a man called Malchus, and cut off his right ear.

But Jesus said unto Peter:

"Stop. Put up again thy sword: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."

The Lord had declared unto Noe and unto his sons: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." [1]

Jesus called the wounded man to come to him. And he touched his ear and healed him. Then, turning toward Peter:

"Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father," said he, "and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But shall I not drink the cup which my father hath destined for me? How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, wherein it is prophesied that thus it must be?"

Then he addressed the chiefest among the priests, the officers of the Temple, the elders of the people who had joined their men, and he said unto them:

"Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves?

"When I was daily with you in the Temple ye stretched forth no hands against me. But this is your hour, the hour of the power of darkness.

"But all this must be in this way, that the word of the prophets might be fulfilled!"

The soldiers, their officer, the agents of the Jews, took him, bound his hands, and pushed him brutally before them.

Seeing this, the disciples fled. Only one young man wished to attach himself to him. Warned, no doubt, of what was being prepared against Jesus, he had run to the garden on the Mount of Olives. In his haste he had put only a linen cloth about his body. The armed men tried to seize him, but leaving his covering in their hands, he escaped them, naked as he was.

[1] Genesis, ix.

ANNAS AND CAIAPHAS

Under Valerius Gratus, the Roman procurator, who preceded Pilate as the governor of Judea, Annas, the High Priest, was deposed from his pontificate. His authority, however, had remained strong enough for him to nominate his five sons and his son-in-law, Caiaphas, as sovereign pontiffs one after the other.

Caiaphas was the High Priest that year; nevertheless Jesus was first dragged before Annas. No doubt this was done in order to give the members of the Sanhedrim time to assemble under Caiaphas as presiding officer.

The people of the Temple feared in Jesus, not the Christ, for they had eyes which saw not, and ears which heard not; but in him they saw one who would reform their habits and their religious customs, which were childishly complicated and hypocritical. They thought him to be a fanatic, a zealot, a revolutionary who was seeking the overthrow of society. Society was the church; the church was made up of these men of the Temple. His criticisms, his arraignments of the Pharisees, even his miracles, were so many attacks upon their authority. These men, descendants of the prophets, were attached to their temporal power. They were persuaded that the Master was the enemy of their position and privilege. They were convinced that he was organizing against them a rebellion of the people.

Now Simon Peter had followed the procession from afar, the procession in the midst of which his Master walked in chains. Another disciple, John, joined him. As John was known to the High Priest and his servants,

he was able to enter the court of the palace of the pontiffs at the same moment that Jesus entered. Peter remained outside near the door. But John spoke to the porter, who allowed Peter to pass, but not without asking:

"Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?"

"I am not," he replied.

And the servants, the sergeants, and the officers had made a fire in the midst of the court, because it was cold. Peter sat down among them and warmed himself while he waited to find out what the end might be.

Meanwhile Annas was questioning Jesus about his disciples and concerning his doctrine.

Jesus said unto him:

"I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the Temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? Ask them which heard me; behold, they know what I said."

At these words, a sergeant who was standing by struck him.

"Answerest thou the High Priest so?" he cried angrily.

Jesus responded gently:

"If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?"

Now Annas sent the prisoner bound unto Caiaphas, the High Priest. He it was who when consulted one day concerning Jesus had expressed this opinion, "that it was proper, even good, that one man should die for the people."

◈ THE SANHEDRIM ◈

The Sanhedrim had been gathered together. Caiaphas was presiding. Immediately after the Lord had been brought in, the cross-questioning began.

Now the members of the Sanhedrim had decided upon the death of the Righteous One. And they sought a false witness whose testimony would give them a motive for the judgment. But they found none. Some said one thing, others another. The testimony never agreed.

And so the members of the high council could decide nothing, for it is written in the law:

"One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established." [1]

At last two men presented themselves who declared that they had heard Jesus say:

"I will destroy this Temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands."

But in the interpretation that each one made of these words, it came out once more that their testimony did not agree.

But Jesus held his peace, full of scorn for the hypocrisy on the part of those who were pretending to judge him.

Exasperated, Caiaphas stood up and said threateningly:

"Answerest thou nothing?" said he. "What is it which these witness against thee?"

Jesus held his peace.

[1] Deuteronomy, xix.

Caiaphas went on:

"If thou art the Christ, say it unto us."

"If I said it unto you," said Jesus, "ye would not believe me."

And to show that he was aware of their bad faith, he said to them also:

"Would ye answer me if I had my turn questioning you? No. No more than ye would now let me go free!"

Infuriated by the bitter irony of Jesus, and determined to down him, Caiaphas then cried:

"I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God."

Now Moses had stated this law, that whoever heard the solemn words of an oath should straightway declare the truth, under penalty of entering a state of sin.

Jesus no longer avoided the issue:

"Thou hast said it. I am he!"

The priests, the doctors, the scribes, the elders, were horrified.

"Verily I say unto all of you," he added, "hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of Heaven."

This prediction concerning the reign of the Messiah Jesus had borrowed in part from David and in part from Daniel:

"The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." [1]

So spoke David.

"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the

[1] Psalms, cx.

Son of man came with the clouds of Heaven, and came to the Ancient of days." [1]

So spoke Daniel.

When Jesus applied this quotation from the prophets to his own reign, Caiaphas and the members of the Sanhedrim yielded to unbounded indignation. They all arose, and the High Priest, rending his garments as a sign of mourning, cried:

"He hath spoken blasphemy!"

Then addressing the men of the Sanhedrim:

"What further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye?"

Then these deaf men, these blind men, these hypocrites, answered:

"He is guilty of death."

For the law of Moses declared: "He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, be he a Jew or a stranger, shall be punished with death and stoned by the congregation." [2]

And all these cowards insulted the Lord openly: some spat in his face, others began to buffet him. The sergeants struck him with staves and with leather thongs. And, covering his face and laughing at him, they demanded:

"Christ, who is he that smote thee?"

◆ PETER'S DENIAL ◆

While these ignominies were occurring in the palace of the High Priest, Peter was in the court warming himself at the fire that was made by the servants and the soldiers.

But the soul of Peter was trembling with cold.

[1] Daniel, vii.

[2] Leviticus, xxiv.

Now a damsel came unto him and earnestly looking upon him said:

"Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth!"

Peter denied him before them all:

"I know not what thou sayest."

The woman continued:

"This man was certainly with the Galilean."

"Woman," answered Peter, "I know him not."

He arose, and in order to escape the curiosity and the questions of those about him he went out into the porch of the palace. Dawn was breaking. And at that moment the cock crew.

Peter was by no means at the end of his troubles. Indeed a man who was passing by not far from him stopped, astonished to see him in this place. And he cried:

"Thou art also of them."

"No," Peter assured him, "I am not."

And he went away to another side.

About an hour later several of the Jews with whom he was talking said:

"Surely thou art one of his disciples, for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech betrayeth thee."

A servant of the High Priest, a relative of the man whom Peter had struck on the ear with his sword, went so far as to ask:

"Did I not see thee in the garden with him?"

Peter flared up. He cursed the Jew, calling down upon his head all the calamities on earth.

And again he swore that he never knew the man of whom they were speaking.

And the cock crew a second time.

At this moment, brutally pushed along by the soldiers and the servants of Caiaphas, Jesus passed by. Seeing

Peter, he looked at him sorrowfully. And Peter remembered the words of the Lord:

"Before the cock crow twice thou shalt deny me thrice."

Peter went out of the palace and wept bitterly.

◆ THE CHASTISEMENT OF JUDAS ◆

Daylight had come. And it was Friday.

In a new meeting the members of the high council confirmed their charges against Jesus which had been spoken during the night. Then, with the exception of the priests who were detained by the morning service in the Temple, all rose and hastened toward the palace of the Roman procurator, Pontius Pilate.

Since Rome had ruled over Judea, the Sanhedrim no longer possessed the power to impose the death sentence. This must be done by the representative of the empire.

Therefore the prisoner had to be summoned before Pilate.

The servants of Caiaphas and the sergeants led him to the tribunal, and his judges went there to support the accusation.

It was at this moment that Judas, who had betrayed his Lord, was seized with remorse. All night long he had lurked around the house of the High Priest. When he saw that they were taking Jesus before the procurator, he understood that the Sanhedrim had decided to put the Master to death. And suddenly his betrayal was a horror to him.

And he went up to the Temple. Several of those to whom he had sold his Master, elders of the people, doctors, high priests, were there. He begged them to take back the thirty pieces of silver, the price of his crime.

"I have sinned," said he; "I have betrayed innocent blood."

But they answered him:

"What is that to us? See thou to that!"

Even those whose instrument of hatred he had been, repulsed him scornfully. The money burned his hands, and he knew not what to do with it. He walked up and down in his sorrow like a wild beast in a cage.

Suddenly he threw down the money in the Temple, and ran out of doors. It was the flight of a madman. He rushed through the streets. He passed out of the gates of the city. He sneaked into the open country. He was drawn, as if in spite of himself, toward the places in which he had so often been with the Master.

But Satan stayed by him.

The wicked man had forgotten the teaching of Jesus concerning love. He despaired of divine pity.

In a field which bordered upon the highway there was an olive tree. Judas took off his belt and hanged himself.

In order that the ignominy might be complete, soon the branch of the tree broke and fell to the ground. The body of Judas burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out upon the dust.

At the Temple the priests picked up the thirty pieces of silver, but they did not know what to do with them. Some advised adding them to the offerings. Others said:

"It is not lawful to put this money into the Treasury, because it is the price of blood."

A potter's field was for sale: the priests bought it. Then to avoid all taint for the Jews, the field was set aside as a place in which to bury strangers who happened to die in the city.

Now the people, when they learned of this, called the field "Aceldama," which means "the field of blood."

Thus the word of the prophet was fulfilled:

"And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value. And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me."

◈ CHRIST BEFORE PILATE ◈

During most of the year Pontius Pilate lived far from Jerusalem, in his palace in Cæsarea, at the seaside. But during the Feast of the Passover he went up to the Holy City. This was more to watch the Jews, who gathered there by hundreds of thousands, and from whom he anticipated some sort of uprising, than to appear to testify, by his presence in the capital of Judea, of his sympathy toward the princes of the church and his respectful indifference for their cult.

The procurator was surprised when they called him to the tribunal at such an early hour in the morning; his astonishment increased when he learned the identity of the prisoner sent to him by the Sanhedrim. More than once his agents had reported to him the presence of Jesus in Judea. As a Roman he was not slow in making up his mind about the ideas of the Master: they could only appear to him to be obscure and futile. But he was filled with curiosity about the man.

Although he was annoyed at being disturbed thus early, Pilate went to the tribunal. He found no one there.

For the Jews to enter the house of a pagan was to be defiled. If they had entered the judgment hall, the men

of the Sanhedrim could not have eaten the Passover. Therefore they remained outside.

This fact added to the annoyance of Pilate. From the threshold of the tribunal he saw Jesus in chains. And straightway he understood that they expected him to impose a sentence of death.

With displeasure in his voice he asked of the Jews:

"What accusation bring ye against this man?"

"If he were not a malefactor," they answered, "we would not have delivered him up unto thee."

Pilate said:

"Take ye him, and judge him according to your law."

The Jews:

"It is not lawful for us to put any man to death!"

Now the prophecy of Jesus had to be fulfilled:

"The Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles (pagans and strangers) to mock and to scourge and to crucify him."

Betrayed, delivered over, condemned—these had happened. Now Roman justice was going to decide about his death. That alone could put him upon the cross. With the Jews it was stoning; they did not crucify.

Thus the men of the Sanhedrim admitted that they expected the procurator to impose a sentence of death.

With what did they charge the Master? Here is the accusation:

"We found this fellow," they said, "perverting the nation and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ the king."

To Pilate there was confusion between the first of the

accusations and the second. This was important enough to be examined. Besides, the real feelings among the notables of the Jewish nation in regard to Rome were known. The denunciation relating to the tribute of Cæsar appeared to him to be a base hypocrisy. And this made him angry. He wanted to question the Master without witnesses. He entered the judgment hall and had the prisoner brought to him. Was it really true that this man aspired to the crown? That was what Pilate wished to clear up.

He could conceive of but one kingdom, that which was concerned with political overlordship.

"Is it true that thou art the king of the Jews?"

"Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?"

Jesus pretended to believe that the Roman was questioning him in all sincerity.

Pilate:

"Am I a Jew?"

That is to say: have I any interest in your being king of the Jews? "Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me. What hast thou done?"

Jesus:

"My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews. But now is my kingdom not from hence."

His kingdom!

Pilate:

"Art thou a king then?"

Jesus:

"Thou hast spoken; I am a king. I was born and I am in this world in order to witness to the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

Doth not he that is of God hear the word of God?

Pilate:

"What is truth?"

How should he have known that the error was in him with his gods?

The procurator rose. He went out of the judgment hall. The attitude of the Saviour and his answers troubled him.

To the Jews who were waiting he said:

"I find in him no fault at all."

Then the priests and the elders of the people began again to make accusations.

Jesus, whom the guards had brought in, kept his peace.

"Hast thou no answer?" Pilate asked of him. "Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?"

But Jesus did not speak.

The procurator marveled greatly.

◆ JESUS BEFORE HEROD ◆

The disdainful silence of the Lord, far from disarming the Jews, increased their hatred. They all spoke at the same time, for they were shaken with rage. They uttered one complaint over and over again like a refrain, because it seemed to them that this complaint ought to arouse the defiance of the procurator.

"He stirreth up the people!" they cried. "He teacheth his dangerous doctrine throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place."

Pilate was not at all duped by their strategy. When he heard them mention Galilee, he quickly asked whether the man were a Galilean. And when he was assured that

it was true, he was content. That would free him from rendering a judgment against the Master.

Galilee was indeed under the jurisdiction of Herod.

Then Pilate sent Jesus before the tetrarch.

At the time of the feast, Herod Antipas left the fortress which was his principal residence and settled himself in Jerusalem in a palace of his own, opposite to the Temple, on the hill of Zion.

It was there that the sergeants took Jesus, followed by the multitude and the notables.

Since the death of John the Baptist, the tetrarch had been troubled in his soul. The memory of the Forerunner pursued him. When he learned that Jesus was sent to him, he was exceeding glad. People had told him marvelous things about the Master. And he was to see him. He hoped that Jesus would perform a miracle before him! He could also make sure that John had not left his grave—for that was his secret fear!

When Jesus appeared, Herod looked at him with curiosity and unrest. This was not at all the man whom he had allowed to be beheaded. He became calm then, and, causing the Lord to approach, he asked him a great many questions.

Jesus answered him nothing.

Herod experienced a great disappointment, which was soon changed into scorn. While the priests and the scribes were pouring out their hypocritical accusations, the tetrarch thought only of devising some way to humiliate the so-called prophet. For he now knew that he had nothing to learn or to fear from him.

At his order, Jesus was dressed in a white robe, which was the costume reserved for the feeble-minded. And then to make fun of him Herod lavished upon him the

marks of the greatest deference. After which he sent him, still clothed in the bizarre garment, back to the procurator. Thus he returned the courtesy he had received at his hands.

And from that day forth, Pilate and Herod were friends, although they had hitherto been enemies.

◈ PILATE'S WIFE ◈
◈ BARABBAS ◈

When Jesus was taken before Pilate once more, Pilate assembled the priests, the elders, and the people.

"Ye have brought this man unto me," said he, "as one that perverteth the people. And, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him. No, nor yet Herod; for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. I will therefore chastise him and release him."

This was not at all what the priests and the magistrates expected. They had recourse to a subterfuge.

Custom decreed that at the Feast of the Passover the governor should pardon unto the people one prisoner.

The princes of the Temple therefore suggested to the Jews that they demand that Pilate conform to the custom. Immediately a great clamor went up from the crowd, which was claiming its privilege.

Now there was in the prison, chained up together with other seditious men, a notorious malefactor named Barabbas. He was accused of having killed a man during an insurrection. Pilate asked the Jews:

"Whom will ye that I release, Barabbas or Jesus, which is called the Christ?"

The men of the Sanhedrim had delivered Jesus for envy. Pilate hoped that the people, reacting from their emotion, would ask for the liberty of the Master.

And, behold, at the moment when he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man, for I have suffered torments this day in a dream because of him."

Claudia Procula [1] was a pious woman, and in her soul she had repudiated paganism. The doctrine of Jesus, concerning which she had informed herself, had made a profound impression upon her. And she was overcome when she heard of the arrest of the Master. All through the night she kept thinking of the drama that was being played in the palace of the High Priest. She sought, by means of her intervention with the procurator, to save the Lord from the hatred of the Jews. Pilate was as sensitive to the warning which Claudia gave him as he was eager to save Jesus. The priests and the scribes, however, scattered here and there among the crowd, persuaded the people to deliver Barabbas and to cause the Master to perish. When the governor asked for the second time:

"Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you?" the Jews cried out in one voice:

"Barabbas!"

"What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ and the King of the Jews?"

All:

"Let him be crucified!"

For the third time, Pilate said:

"Why, what evil hath he done? I find in him nothing that deserves death. I will chastise him and let him go."

But the multitude:

[1] Gospel of Nicodemus (apocryphal).

"Crucify him! Crucify him!"

And the shouts of the priests mingled with those of the people in a furious tumult.

Barabbas accordingly was released, while the soldiers seized brutally upon Jesus.

Now Barabbas was a brigand.

◈ THE SCOURGING ◈

There was in the judgment hall a short column made of black marble with white veins. It was placed upon a small pedestal. Here, stripped of his garments, Jesus was tied. Then the executioners beat him with whips made of leather thongs. To the thongs were attached bits of bone and leaden balls.

The Jewish law forbade giving more than forty blows with the whip. But the Romans paid no attention to this prohibition; they beat a condemned man until he sank to the earth, in his own blood.

Jesus endured the horrible torture without uttering a word of complaint.

Under the blows, the blood oozed from his torn flesh; the bones of his back were stripped bare.

Soon insult was added to this martyrdom. The soldiery began to amuse themselves. They untied Jesus, who was half fainting, and they pushed and dragged him through the judgment hall. There the legionaries pressed round about him, laughing, jostling one another, making revolting jokes. They dressed him up as for a burlesque, in a scarlet robe; they wove a crown of thorns which they put upon his head, they put a reed in his right hand like a scepter, and bowing the knee before him they cried:

"Hail! King of the Jews!"

After that they spit upon his face and slapped him. Some took reeds and smote him on the head.

◈ ECCE HOMO ◈

Meanwhile, yet another time, Pilate tried to save him. He went out upon the market place and addressed the Jews.

"Behold," he said, "I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him."

Jesus appeared, exhausted, bleeding, crowned with thorns, and covered with the red robe, which stuck to his wounds.

And Pilate said:

"*Ecce homo!*"—behold the man!

The procurator hoped he would see a gesture of pity. But as soon as the priests, the scribes, and the people saw Jesus, the cries of hatred burst out anew:

"Crucify him! Crucify him!"

Heartbroken, Pilate said to them:

"Take ye him, and crucify him." And he kept repeatting, "I find no fault in him."

The Jews answered him:

"We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."

They were speaking of the law of Moses, which says: "He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord shall be punished with death."

These words entered the soul of Pilate, for he remembered the warning that was given him by his wife, Claudia Procula. He went again into the judgment hall, and, having sent for Jesus, he questioned him gently:

"Whence art thou?"

But Jesus gave him no answer.

"Speakest thou not unto me?" continued Pilate. "Knowest thou not that I have the power to crucify thee and have power to release thee?"

Then, without anger, Jesus said to him:

"Thou couldest have no power at all against me except it were given thee from above. Therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin."

If the Father had not been willing that the fate of the Son should be placed in the hands of the procurator, Pilate would have had no power over him. And Jesus forgave his judge. But it was not so concerning the Jews, who were deaf unto his words and delivered him over through hatred.

With his mind made up to set the prisoner free, Pilate went out of the judgment hall to a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha, the terrace where the tribunal was sitting. He heard the Jews shouting:

"If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar."

This new argument on the part of the Jews impressed the procurator. Fear of Tiberius recalled him to prudence. When he had seated himself, he had Jesus brought out.

"Behold your king," said Pilate.

But the Jews continued to cry:

"Death! Death! Crucify him!"

"Shall I crucify your king?"

"We have no king but Cæsar."

Pilate, seeing that he was gaining nothing, but that on the contrary the tumult grew, wished at least to testify

publicly that he placed upon the Jews the responsibility of the sentence which they were forcing from him. He sent for water and washed his hands.

"I am innocent of the blood of this just person," said he; "see ye to it."

"His blood be on us and on our children!" answered the Jews.

Then Pilate commanded that it be unto them according to their desire. And he delivered Jesus unto them to be crucified.

Now it was the eve of the Passover, and about the sixth hour—eleven o'clock in the morning.

◆ THE WAY OF THE CROSS ◆

An immense clamor arose from the place where the Jews were waiting for the decree of the governor. The soldiery had to push back the people, who were advancing impetuously toward the tribunal, to lay hands upon the condemned man. But he remained calm. Already they were stripping him of the grotesque trappings in which he had been dressed up. They gave him back his own raiment. The crown of thorns was put back upon his head. Then they hung around his neck a white parchment. Pilate, in order to mock the Jews, had had written upon it in Hebrew, in Greek, and in Latin this inscription, painted in red:

JESUS OF NAZARETH, KING OF THE JEWS

The cause for his condemnation was lacking.

As soon as they had read it, the indignant priests presented themselves before the governor.

"Do not put: 'King of the Jews'; put what he said himself: 'I Am the King of the Jews.' "

But Pilate was obdurate:

"What is written, is written."

And that day two robbers were to be put to death upon the cross. Pilate gave orders that they were to be led to their punishment along with Jesus, not to insult the wretched end of the Lord, but to emphasize the scorn which was inspired by the Jews.

Then the procession set out upon its sorrowful way. Through the narrow streets of Jerusalem, winding and terraced, and along the dusty highway, it made its way toward Golgotha. It was outside the city, on raised ground; and from this it took its name, that it made one think of a skull, and nothing grew there. It was also said (and that would have given its name to the little hill) that the head of Adam was buried there.[1]

That is why there are a death's head and two crossed bones at the foot of crucifixes.

The procession moved in this order: At the head, a centurion on horse; then within a hollow square formed of soldiers, Jesus, followed by the two robbers, each one bearing a massive cross made of pine. Back of them came the crowd, noisy and ragged—men, women, children, all curious to see the spectacle that was before them. Finally, seated upon asses, priests, scribes. Not one friend, not one disciple.

The sun was high in the sky. Jesus, exhausted by a sleepless night, torn in his flesh and in his soul, was advancing with difficulty, for he was bowed down with

[1] Tradition.

the weight of the cross. He stumbled and fell.[1] They were on the outskirts of the city; and there, at the gate of the gardens, waited Mary,[2] accompanied by John, Mary Magdalene, Mary Salome, and several other women.

Now a man from Cyrene, called Simon, whose sons, Alexander and Rufus, were destined to espouse the new faith of Christ, was coming back from the fields. The centurion called him and ordered him to put the cross of Jesus upon his shoulders.

The Lord did not arise.

Two soldiers had to lift him to his feet, and they supported him.[3]

Upon the threshold of a humble house, a Jew called Ahasuerus was watching the sinister procession. Jesus, feeling faint again, wished to stop; but, seized with a sudden fury, the Jew insulted him, using revolting words, and then shouted to the soldiers that they must make him push on.

Then, turning toward this man his face, down which flowed sweat and blood, Jesus said to him:

"Thou shalt wander upon the face of the earth, until I return." [4]

It was customary to give to the men who were being tortured a drink made of wine mixed with myrrh and poppies, in order to dull their senses and calm their suf-

[1] Tradition.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] Popular legend.

fering. This gesture of pity was often made by women of the highest standing.

Now there was in Jerusalem a great lady who secretly was in touch with the disciples. Some say that she was named Berenice, others Seraphia; and she has been called Veronica—*vera icon*, true portrait—because of the act performed by her that day.

She lived in a fine house which stood upon the path of sorrows.

When she knew that the procession was coming, Veronica went to meet it. According to the Jewish custom, she wore a veil which covered her head and her shoulders. A little girl nine years old stayed close beside her. Under her cloak Veronica was hiding the wine that she had prepared to give to the condemned man.

Threading her way through the multitude, even getting through the soldiers of the escort, she threw herself at the feet of Jesus.

The little girl, who was timid, did not let go of her robe.

"Allow me," said Veronica, "to wipe the face of my Lord."

She took off her veil and gave it to Jesus.

Jesus took the veil and wiped his face with it. Then he gave it back to Veronica, who, after lifting it to her lips, placed it against her heart. Then she arose.

And, behold, it happened that the sweat and the blood which were upon the Holy Face had imprinted the divine features of the Lord upon the veil of the woman of pity.

Meanwhile, the little girl held out the aromatic wine toward Jesus, but the soldiers pushed her away with insults and threats.[1]

[1] Tradition.

And the procession went on.

At this moment, Jesus turned toward the women that were following, beating their breasts and crying.

The word of the prophets came to his mind:

"Upon the wing of abominations shall come desolation, until the ruin that has been determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

And Jesus said:

"Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck!"

And recalling the words of the prophet Hosea, he added:

"Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us!

"For if they do these things in a green tree what shall be done in a dry?"

He did not want them to weep over him. The righteous one does not complain, for he fears not at all, and the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to him. But all might weep over themselves and do penance because of iniquity. Verily, if the righteous be treated thus, what will be the treatment of the impious and the sinner? Happy then the women that have no children; they shall not suffer in the flesh of their sons.

"Let his blood be upon us and upon our children!" the Jews cried unto Pilate. Sooner than they thought it would come: the day when they would be terribly tried.

◆ GOLGOTHA ◆

The procession arrived upon Golgotha.

While the helpers of the executioner were digging, others prepared the wedges, the cords, and the nails.

Then they crucified the condemned.

In his two hands, in his two feet, they drove long iron nails.

Then the cross was raised. On the top of it was the white parchment with the red inscription: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews."

And they crucified with him the two robbers, one to the right, and the other to the left.

Thus was accomplished the word of the Scriptures:

"And he was numbered with the transgressors."

And Jesus said:

"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

When the work was finished, the soldiers divided the garments of the Lord Christ into four parts. Now the coat of Jesus was without a seam, woven from the top throughout.

The soldiers therefore said among themselves:

"Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it."

Once again the word of the Scriptures was fulfilled, for David, prophesying the suffering and the triumph of Christ, had said:

"They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots." [1]

Thus did the soldiery. Then they sat down to watch that no one come near the Son of man in his agony.

[1] Psalms, xxii.

From the cross Jesus saw Jerusalem with its houses huddled one against the other. Upon the terraces of the houses the skins of lambs, whose throats had been cut for the Passover, were drying. The white towers of the Temple, the brown mass of the palace of Herod, he saw also.

At his feet was an oasis of verdure, the garden of Joseph of Arimathea.

At the foot of the cross, kept in order by the guardians, the crowd was looking upon the suffering of these men who were awaiting death as a deliverance. And they rejoiced in the sight. Priests, scribes, elders, mingled with the people. And they reviled him.

"Ho!" they cried, tossing their heads in scorn, "thou that destroyest the Temple of the Lord, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross!

"He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the Christ, the elect of God, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him!

"He trusted in God; let God deliver him now if he loves him. Did he not say, I am the Son of God?"

The soldiers added their sarcasm to the insults of the Jews. Approaching the cross, they offered him wine and laughingly said:

"If thou art the Christ, save thyself!"

"If thou be Christ, save thyself and us!" said the one of the robbers who was crucified at his left.

The unfortunate man, who was about to descend to the kingdom of shadows, expressed hatred through a mouth dry with thirst.

But the robber on the right said to the other:

"Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same

condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss."

And, turning his head toward Jesus:

"Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom."

"Verily, verily, I say unto you," answered Jesus, "for this act of faith, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Now the man was called Dismas, and he deserved to be called the good robber; the other was called Gesta, which means the wicked robber.[1]

"We wait for light; the Messiah—but behold obscurity; we wait for brightness, but we walk in darkness. We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noon day as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men." [2]

Thus spoke Isaiah, the prophet.

"The Lord hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their works!

"Shall not the land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwelleth therein? and it shall rise up wholly as a flood; and it shall be cast out and drowned, as by the flood of Egypt.

"And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon and I will darken the earth in the clear day." [3]

Thus spoke Amos, the prophet.

[1] Gospel of Nicodemus (apocryphal).
[2] Isaiah, lix.
[3] Amos, viii.

Now it was about the sixth hour—noon—when the crosses were set up, and until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the earth.

And, behold, Jesus saw, mingled with the crowd looking from afar, the group of holy women that had followed him from Galilee, to serve him. Among them was Mary his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, mother of James the Less, Mary Magdalene, and Salome, mother of the sons of Zebedee. And near them was John.

When the crowd was withdrawing and the watchfulness of the guards had relaxed, Mary, John, and the holy women approached the cross.

Then, his eyes on the disciple, Jesus said unto his mother:

"Woman, behold thy son!"

To the disciple he said:

"Behold thy mother!"

And from that hour, Mary lived close to John.

◈ MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME? ◈

The presence of Mary and the beloved disciple brought comfort to the heart of Jesus, but his flesh was weary; his agony had lasted three hours, and suffering had exhausted his fortitude. The Son was to return to the Father. Alas! the man must die, and the man had bled until his strength was gone.

"Eloi, eloi, lama sabachthani?" he cried: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

From the depths of his soul the supreme prayer went up to God.

"Eloi, eloi, lama sabachthani?"

The first verse of the Psalm in which David told of the martyrdom and the triumph of the Messiah was upon his lips. Often had he said it when he needed strength, this sublime chant of love and suffering. In advance, he saw in it all that he was to suffer.

Why should not the words of David come to him at the moment when the prophecy was being realized?

"Eloi, eloi, lama sabachthani?"

His weakness kept him from saying more, and it was in his soul that the hymn was finished, the hymn where his glory and his agony had been recorded a thousand years before this hour:

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from my groans, why dost thou leave me alone in agony?

"O my God, I cry in the day time, and thou hearest not; and in the night season I am not silent.

"But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

"Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.

"They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.

"But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.

"All they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying:

"He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.

"But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breast.

"I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly.

"Be not far from me, for trouble is near, for there is none to help.

"Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.

"They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.

"I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint.

"My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.

"My strength is dried up like a potsherd.

"My tongue cleaveth to my jaws.

"Thou hast brought me into the dust of death.

"For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.

"I may tell all my bones.

"They look and stare upon me.

"They part my garments among them and cast lots upon my vesture.

"But be not thou far from me, O Lord. O my strength, haste thee to help me!

"Deliver my soul from the sword: my life from the power of the dog.

"Save me from the lion's mouth.

"Save me from the horns of the unicorns!" [1]

"Eloi, eloi, lama sabachthani?"

The Jews all knew the song of David, but those who were there, through cruel mockery, were pleased to pre-

[1] Psalms, xxii.

tend to misunderstand the words that came from the paling lips of Jesus:

"Behold, he calleth Elias," they said with laughter.

Now when he had finished saying the hymn of sorrow and triumph, seeing that all had been accomplished according to the prophets, Jesus murmured:

"I thirst!"

For there was yet to be fulfilled this word of David:

"And in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." [1]

There was there, according to the custom of the legionaries, a jar filled with bitter wine that was very aromatic. One of the guards took a sponge and filled it with vinegar and put it on a reed to raise it to the height of the mouth of him that was tortured.

The Jews protested, but the man shouted to them:

"Let be; let us see whether Elias will come to take away his cross!"

Jesus received the vinegar, and he said:

"It is finished!"

Then, lifting his eyes toward the darkened sky:

"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

He bowed his head and cried with a loud voice.

And gave up the ghost.

◆ STRANGE EVENTS AFTER THE DEATH OF JESUS ◆

Then, at that instant, astonishing things happened: in the Temple the veil which separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom; the earth did quake; the rocks split; the graves were opened; many bodies of the saints which

[1] Psalms, lxix.

slept arose; and they came out of the graves and entered Jerusalem, the Holy City, and appeared unto many.

On Golgotha, between the cross of Jesus and that of the wicked robber, a deep crevice appeared.

Some of the Jews, overcome with astonishment, hurried to the cave under Calvary. It was a cave which was said to contain the skull of Adam and the tomb of Melchizedek. And they wanted to see how far the earth was opened.

The whole rock was split apart.

And, behold, when they put their hands into the cave, they brought them out covered with blood.[1]

Now the centurion who had stood opposite to the men crucified had heard the last words of Jesus. When he felt the earth trembling under the feet of his horse, he was filled with fear. He praised God, crying:

"This man was righteous. Surely he was the Son of God!"

And those who were on guard near Jesus with the centurion saw all that happened, and they feared greatly. And they cried out:

"Yes, this man surely was the Son of God!"

Then all those that were there dispersed, beating their breasts.

Only a few women remained, and they were beholding afar off: Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and of Joseph, and Salome. And several others were there, who had gone up with him to Jerusalem.

The Romans used to abandon upon the cross the bodies of those whom they had condemned. The birds of prey

[1] Tradition.

fed upon them. As it was a slow death, the executioners, wishing to shorten the agony of a crucified man, often broke the legs with the blows of their axes.

With the Jews, the law required them to bury before night the body of a man who had been put to death. That is why the priests and the scribes went before Pilate to ask him to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the men themselves taken down from the cross.

Then came the soldiers who broke the legs of the two robbers. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was dead already they did not break his legs. However, one of the soldiers struck him a blow with a spear on the right side,[1] doubtless to make sure that he was dead, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

Now the soldier who had pierced the right side of Jesus was called Longinus,[2] and his eyes were sore.

It happened that several drops of the blood of the Lord fell upon the sore eyes of Longinus. And immediately his eyes were healed. This was astonishing to Longinus, and he was so deeply grateful that he believed on Jesus.[3]

Later he retreated into a convent in Cæsarea, where, they say, he remained for twenty-eight years. He might have stayed there longer, but the people beheaded him because of his faith.

For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled concerning the Son of man:

"A bone of him shall not be broken."

For when the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, in the land of Egypt, he said unto them:

[1] Gospel of Nicodemus.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*

"This is the ordinance of the Passover: There shall no stranger eat thereof:

"But every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then he shall eat thereof.

"A foreigner and an hired servant shall not eat thereof.

"In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth aught of the flesh abroad out of the house: neither shall ye break a bone thereof." [1]

Jesus was the lamb which when sacrificed was to redeem all the sins of men.

His ignominious end justified this word of Scripture: "They shall look on him whom they pierced."

For in the second year of the reign of Darius, in the eighth month, the word of the Lord was spoken to the prophet Zechariah, son of Barachiah, son of Iddo. And the Lord, speaking of the sorrows of Jerusalem, repentance, and purification of Israel, said:

"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon him, whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born." [2]

◈ THE DESCENT OF JESUS FROM THE CROSS ◈

And now when the even was come, a rich man and just, called Joseph of Arimathea, went boldly before Pilate and begged the body of Jesus.

Joseph was a good and honorable man. In secret (for

[1] Exodus, xii.
[2] Zechariah, xii.

he feared the Jews), he was one of the disciples of the Lord, and he also waited for the Kingdom of God. At the time of the trial, in the house of Caiaphas, he had not consented to the dastardly deed which was done. Nor had he approved of the actions of the princes of the Temple and the elders of the people, among whom he himself belonged.

Pilate was surprised to learn that Jesus was already dead. He sent for the centurion who had been in charge of the execution. The centurion assured him that Jesus was dead.

Then Pilate gave the body to Joseph, who went quickly to the house where Jesus, eating with the apostles, had broken the unleavened bread and had said, "This is my body," and had lifted the cup and had said, "This is my blood." Joseph took the cup; then he bought a winding sheet and went to the cross.

During this time, Nicodemus—the man who came by night to the Master—had brought myrrh and aloes, to anoint the Lord.

Nicodemus it was who helped Joseph to take Jesus down from the cross.

They put up two ladders, one to the right and another to the left. Joseph climbed upon the first one. With pincers he took out the nail that had pierced the right hand of the crucified man.

With great difficulty Nicodemus drew out the nail that had been cruelly driven into the left hand. Then he came down to take out the nails that were in the feet.

Joseph supported the body as best he could. And Mary, in tears, stretched out her hands toward the bleeding hands of her dear child.

When the nails had been taken from the feet, Joseph

came slowly down the ladder and, aided by Nicodemus, supported his precious burden.[1]

When the body was laid upon the ground, on the white winding sheet, Joseph touched the cup to the wounds, the cup into which Jesus had broken the unleavened bread. Into the cup came a few drops of the divine blood. During the rest of his life, Joseph piously cherished the chalice, this Holy Grail. And afterward only pure knights might keep it, for it had the power of conferring miraculous privileges—like communing directly with God.[2]

Now the poor desolate mother, seated on the ground, had taken upon her lap the head of her Son. And she kissed it and bathed it with her tears.

"Alas! dearly beloved Son," she said sorrowfully, "what hast thou done? Why did they put thee to death? Alas! what shall I do now, a heartbroken mother? Behold, now is changed to sorrow that joy that came to me through thee when thou wast conceived!"

And in her deep sorrow, she said again:

"Alas! my Son, my happiness, the life of my soul, why art thou at this hour so far away from me! My God, have mercy upon me! Alas! my tender Son who will comfort me no more!"

Round about her, the other women were weeping, as much for grief upon seeing their Master dead as in compassion for the distress of the Virgin Mary.

Joseph of Arimathea, seeing that night was falling, said to Mary:

[1] Legendary story.
[2] Tradition.

"Mother of sorrows, now let us wind the body of thy Son in this white sheet and take it to the tomb."

But she answered:

"Alas! hasten not to take away from my sight my beloved Son—or else bury me with him!"

And holding the head of her child close on her lap, she gazed longingly and despairingly upon the beloved face, soiled as it was with blood, and torn in many places by the crown of thorns.

John, however, said unto her:

"But see what hour it is! Night is coming upon us. Let them bury the body of Jesus."

Then the Virgin Mary remembered that the Lord had given her into John's care, and she was willing to do all that he wished.

Joseph and Nicodemus took the body of Jesus, and anointed it, binding it with linen cloths according to Jewish custom. Then they folded it in the winding sheet, beginning at the breast. When they were about to cover the feet, Mary Magdalene cried:

"I pray you, leave this part unto me. Let me wrap the poor feet, for it was at his feet that my sins were pardoned."

And, weeping, she gazed upon the feet of the Lord, pierced by the nails, broken and soiled with blood. She washed them with tears of pity, as she had washed them in other days with tears of contrition. Then she wiped them with her beautiful blond hair and wrapped them as best she could.

Then the Virgin Mary, with her face upon that of her Son, spoke with love:

"My dear and beloved Son, I hold thee upon my breast —dead. I, thy sorrowing mother, must bury thee. But

how can I live without thee? Since my body cannot descend into the grave with thee, I give unto thee my soul. Beloved Son, it is in agony that we do part!"

When she had spoken, Mary kissed her child upon the mouth. Then she covered his holy face.[1]

◈ THEY PLACED HIM IN A TOMB ◈

Now near to the place where Jesus was crucified was a garden owned by Joseph. There he had a new tomb, cut in the rocks, which had never been used. As the day of preparation for the Sabbath was nearly done, and as the body must be put into the tomb before the beginning of the Sabbath, it was placed there, for there was no time to seek another grave. After that, when he had rolled a large stone unto the entrance of the grave, Joseph went away.

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, mother of Joseph and sister of Mary mother of Jesus, and the women who had come from Galilee to the Lord were seated near the tomb. They watched over all: the place where the body was laid and the care that was given unto it. But they judged the burial inadequate, and therefore they returned to Jerusalem in order to prepare the spices with which to complete it. But, in observance of the law, they kept the Sabbath by remaining at rest the whole of the next day.

Meanwhile, on that day, which was the Sabbath day, the day of the Sabbath of the Passover, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to find Pilate.

"Lord," they said to him, "we remember what was

[1] Account of the descent from the cross, according to a legendary text of the fifteenth century.

said by this deceiver when he was alive: After three days, I shall rise again."

They pretended to laugh and to scoff, but fear chilled the very marrow of their bones.

"Command then that the grave be securely guarded until the third day, lest the disciples come and take him away secretly so as to tell the people, He is risen from the dead. For the final deception would be worse than the first."

Pilate answered:

"Look after this yourselves. Go and do what you think is necessary."

Whereupon they went and made sure the sepulcher, by sealing the stone and placing guards at the entrance.

VI

HELL AND HEAVEN

◆ THE DESCENT INTO HELL ◆

The body of Jesus rested in the grave, but not his soul.

He who was without sin, he suffered for sinners; righteous, he had suffered for the wicked.

Dead according to the flesh, he was living according to the spirit.

And in spirit he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing. The Gospel was preached unto the dead, so that the dead, like the living, might be judged according to the flesh, and so that, like God, they might live according to the spirit.[1]

And behold what now happened.[2]

Suddenly the dead that were in hell were surrounded by a golden light, like that of the sun, and the dazzling fire made light about them.

And immediately Adam, the father of the human race, trembled with joy, as well as the patriarchs and the prophets. And they cried:

[1] I Peter.

[2] Account of the descent into hell, according to Abbé Migne; the Gospel of Nicodemus (apocryphal).

"This light is the Author of eternal light, who hath promised to give unto us eternal light."

And the prophet Isaiah said:

"It is the light of the Father, it is the Son of God. For I foretold it when I was in the land of the living: the land of Zabulon and the land of Naphtalim. I said: Beyond Jordan the people that sitteth in darkness shall see a great light; and the light shall shine for those who are in the place of death. Behold, it has happened; it shines for us who were laid low in death."

And as the light was shining upon them and the joy of all was great, there came he who had been sovereign pontiff in Jerusalem, he that had received the infant Jesus in the Temple. He was called Simeon. Now his sons, Carimus and Lucius, were there, and Simeon said unto them:

"Glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, for I received him in my hands a few days after his birth, and I presented him in the Temple. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, I glorified him: mine eyes have seen the salvation which thou hast prepared in the presence of all the people; the light which thou hast lightened for the revelation of the nations and the glory of thy people Israel."

When they heard these things, the multitude of the saints rejoiced.

And then there appeared a man who was clothed like a hermit.

"Who art thou?" all the saints asked of him.

He answered:

"I am John, the Voice and the prophet of the Most High, he that was before the coming of the Christ, in order to prepare his way and to reveal salvation to my people for the remission of sins. Now, seeing him come

unto me, I was possessed of the Holy Spirit, and I confessed, Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. And I baptized him in the river Jordan, and saw the Holy Spirit descending upon him, in the form of a white dove. And I heard a voice from Heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son. In him have I given my pity, hear ye him! Behold I was before him in the world; and I came to announce unto you that the Son of God himself, leaving the Kingdom on High, would come soon and visit us. He will come unto us who are sitting in the darkness and the shadow of death."

At the moment when all the saints were manifesting great joy, Satan, the prince of death, went unto the prince of hell.

"Make ready," he said unto him, "to take Jesus, who glorifies himself, as being the Christ, the Son of God, although he is a man that fears death, for he cried, My soul is sad unto death! He was opposed to me in many things: many men whom I had made blind or lame, or deaf or leprous, many whom I tormented through wicked demons, he healed with a word; those whom I brought down to death, he took them away."

The prince of hell asked:

"Who is this prince who is powerful and yet fears death? All the great of the earth are subject unto me, when thou hast bent them under thy power. Who then is this Jesus who fears death and yet rises against thee? If he is so powerful in his humanity, surely, I say unto you, he is all powerful in his divinity. None can resist him. When he says that he fears death, he deceives you. And woe unto you in eternity."

And as Satan and the prince of hell were disputing,

there was heard a voice like thunder, like the sound of the hurricane:

"Princes, lift up your gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in."

Then the prince of hell said unto Satan:

"Go far away from me and go out of my kingdom. Since you are so brave, you may enter into combat against the King of Glory. But what have you to do with him?"

And when he had thus spoken, the prince of hell expelled Satan from his kingdom violently.

And he gave orders to his ministers:

"Close the impassable gates of bronze; push the iron bolts. Resist with a valiant heart, lest we be reduced to captivity, we the guardians of the captives."

But the multitude of the saints cried:

"Open the gates, that the King of Glory may come in!"

And David, the divine prophet, came and said:

"When I was in the land of the living, did I not prophesy, The mercy of the Lord shall bear witness unto him; his miracles shall announce him to the sons of men? He hath taken them away from the path of iniquity. He hath broken the bronze gates and the iron bolts hath he destroyed."

And the prophet Isaiah came and said:

"When I was in the land of the living, did I not prophesy, The dead shall awake, the dead shall rise from their tombs, and the dead upon earth shall tremble with joy, for in the blood of the Saviour is their healing? And I also said, Death, where is thy victory? Death, where is thy sting?"

"Open the gates!" cried all the saints again. "Thou art vanquished and laid low! Thou art impotent."

And, behold, the Lord of majesty appeared in the form of a man. Into eternal darkness he brought light, and he broke all chains. The mighty aid of invincible virtue visited those who had been sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death in sin.

The prince of hell and of death and his officers, overcome with fright, cried:

"Thou hast conquered. Who then art thou, thou whom the Lord hath sent to our confusion? Who are thou, thou the incorruptible, who wast able to overturn our power through the irresistible power of thy majesty? Who art thou, thou who art so great and so small, so humble and so magnificent, soldier and general, wonderful knight in the body of a slave? King of Glory, dead and living, whom the cross hath borne in death. Thou who wast dead, lying stiff in the grave, who art now come living unto us. And every creature trembled at thy death, and all the stars were shaken; and now among our dead thou art free, and thou troublest our legions. Who art thou, who unchainest captives? Who art thou, thou who floodest with dazzling light those who were blinded by the darkness of sin?"

And when the prince of hell and his officers had spoken, likewise all the legions of demons, stricken with the same terror, cried:

"Whence art thou, Jesus, a man of such power and great majesty, without blemish and innocent of crime?

"Until now the earth hath been subject unto us; they paid us tribute for our abominable practices. And never hath the earth sent us a mortal like this one; never hath such a presence been destined to hell.

"Who art thou, thou who, without fear, hast crossed the frontiers of our kingdom? Not only dost thou not

fear our torture, but thou wouldst deliver all those whom we now have in chains! Satan, our prince, said that through the death of Jesus upon the cross he himself would have power over the whole world. Art thou that Jesus?"

Jesus did not condescend to answer all these sinners, all these criminals, all these heretics, all these demons. But the King of Glory, in his majesty, crushed Death under his feet, seized upon Satan, deprived hell of its power, and brought Adam forth into the clearness of light.

Then the prince of hell violently reproached Satan.

"O Beelzebub," said he, "prince of damnation and chief of destruction, derision of the angels of God, scorn of the righteous, what didst thou wish to do? Thou didst wish to crucify the King of Glory, promising to us the power and the profit of his ruin and death. Knowest thou not what thou hast done in folly? For, behold, this Jesus, in the splendor of his divinity, hath caused the shadows of death to pass away. He hath penetrated the depths of the most secret prisons. He hath delivered the captives; he hath set free those who are in chains. Behold, all those who groaned under our torments insult us; they heap their curses upon us. Our empires and our kingdoms are done away, and no longer do we inspire fear in the race of men.

"O Satan, prince of all evil, father of the impious and of rebels, what hast thou done? Those who from the beginning until now despaired of safety and of life lament no more; no sigh is in their breasts, no cry is in their mouths, no trace of tears is seen upon their cheeks. O prince Satan, keeper of the keys of hell, by the wood of

the cross thou hast lost those riches acquired by the tree of falsehood and the expulsion from paradise. And all joy disappeared when thou didst nail upon the tree this Christ Jesus, the King of Glory. Thou hast worked against thyself and against me. Know now how many torments are reserved for thee, under my direction, for eternity. O Satan, prince of all the wicked, author of death and source of all pride, for having dared to crucify unjustly the righteous one, thou hast lost all: the wicked, the impious, and the unjust of the whole world."

Then the King of Glory said unto the prince of hell:

"This prince Satan shall be under thy power for all time, instead of Adam and his sons, who are my righteous ones."

Then the Lord lifted his hand and said:

"Come unto me, all ye my saints, who are made in my image. Ye who were condemned by the tree, the devil and death, ye shall see that both the devil and death are condemned by the tree."

Straightway all the saints were united under the hand of the Lord. And the Lord said unto Adam:

"Peace unto thee and unto all thy sons, my righteous ones."

And the Lord, stretching out his hands, made the sign of the cross upon Adam and upon all the saints, and, holding the right hand of Adam, he lifted him out of hell. And all the saints followed him, and he united them with the archangel Michael, who took them all into the glorious grace of paradise.

◈ THE THREE MARYS ◈

The Sabbath was over, and on the morning of the third day there was a great trembling of the earth. And an angel of the Lord, come down from Heaven, rolled away the stone at the entrance of the tomb, and sat down upon it.

His face was like lightning, his robe like the snow.

At the sight of him, stricken with terror, those who were guarding the sepulcher were as if dead.

Meanwhile in Jerusalem the three Marys had not forgotten their pious vow that they would complete the burial. Mary, mother of James, and Mary Magdalene were weeping. Mary Salome said to them:

"Come, my sisters, in spite of our sorrow, we must buy spices and anoint the body of Jesus to prevent the worms from eating it."

"Woe unto us!" groaned the three Marys; then, speaking to the merchant: "Tell us, young merchant, how much are these perfumes?"

The merchant:

"Ladies, please notice that the spices I offer you are the best quality; they are worth a golden talent; that is the lowest price."

The three Marys:

"Who can know the sorrow in our souls?"

As the price was too high for their purses, the holy women went to find another merchant.

"Ladies, what do you desire?" said he.

The three Marys:

"Merchant, we want spices; have you what we need?"

The merchant:

"You have only to speak."

The three Marys:

"We want balm, incense, myrrh, aloes."

The merchant:

"All that is before you. How much must you have?"

The three Marys:

"We must have about one hundred pounds. How much is it, merchant?"

The merchant:

"A thousand pence."

The three Marys:

"That will do." [1]

They gave the sum of money, took the spices, and hastened away toward the gardens of Joseph of Arimathea.

They were greatly distressed, for they did not know what they should do in order to enter the tomb.

"Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulcher?"

Mary Magdalene was ahead of the others. When she reached the garden, she saw to her astonishment that the stone had been rolled away. "The Jews have stolen the body!" she said to herself. And immediately she ran to tell Simon Peter and the other disciple whom Jesus loved:

"They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid him!"

At this amazing news, Peter hurried out. John and Mary Magdalene followed him.

During this time, Mary, mother of James, Salome, and the other women who had joined them arrived at the tomb. And the door was open. When they entered

[1] According to a seventeenth century text.

they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus, and this put them to confusion.

And, behold, two men appeared unto them who were dressed in shining robes. And in their terror they prostrated themselves upon the ground.

Then the young man who was seated at the right—it was an angel from Heaven—spoke and said unto them:

"Be not affrighted. I know that ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified. Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here. He is risen, as he told you. Come, see the place where they laid him. Remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

"But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you."

Then they remembered the words of Jesus. And ineffable joy filled their hearts. But they were also seized with so great a fear that they went out quickly and fled from the sepulcher; neither said they anything to any man.

Now Peter and John went forth. John, who was the younger, came first to the sepulcher. On the ground he saw the linen cloths and the shroud which had bound his divine Master. His sorrow was so great that he had to lean against the stone, without being able to go farther. At that moment, Simon Peter, who followed him, went into the sepulcher. And Peter likewise saw the linen cloths and the veil which had covered the face of the

Lord. Now the veil was not lying with the other linen cloths; it was wrapped together in a place by itself.

Then John went in, and he saw and believed.

He saw that God had broken the chains of death for the Saviour; he believed in the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

And Peter and John went home, wondering in themselves at what had happened.

◆ JESUS APPEARS TO MAGDALENE AND TO THE HOLY WOMEN ◆

Now Mary Magdalene, out of whom Jesus had cast seven demons, came back to the garden. She stood without at the sepulcher weeping. And as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulcher: two angels, dressed in white robes, were sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

"Woman, why weepest thou?" said the angels.

"Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."

And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing; but Mary's eyes were so full of tears that she knew not that it was Jesus.

"Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?"

She, supposing him to be the gardener, replied:

"Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away."

"Mary!" said Jesus, very gently.

"Rabboni!" cried Mary, which is to say, "Master!"

And she fell at his feet.

"Touch me not," said Jesus, "for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father."

Then he went on his way.

Mary Magdalene was still prostrated on the ground. When she arose, the Lord had disappeared.

Then she retraced her steps to the house where the disciples remained in secret, for they feared the Jews.

Meanwhile Mary, mother of James, Salome, and the other women, among whom was Joanna, the wife of Chusa, Herod's steward, had recovered from the terror which had come upon them at the sight of the angels in the sepulcher. They were approaching Jerusalem when suddenly a man appeared before them:

"I salute you," said he.

It was Jesus. They prostrated themselves before him, kissed his feet, and worshiped him.

Jesus said unto them:

"Be not afraid. Go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me."

They were thinking to follow him; but he was gone.

Now Mary Magdalene, who had come by the shortest way, arrived at the house of the disciples. She found them lamenting and in tears.

And they believed not what she said.

But soon after, the other women came. Unto them also Jesus had appeared; unto them also he had spoken. And they repeated his words to the eleven and to the others that were there. But they persisted in not believing, for they believed the visions were merely women's fancies!

When the angel had rolled away the stone from the tomb, the guards were thrown to the earth and were as if dead.

When they arose again, the holy women were traversing the garden. Then they hid themselves as best they could behind trees. Fear was in their hearts, and they trembled like asses under blows, at the thought that the chief priests would learn that they had not faithfully guarded the door of the sepulcher. For who would believe their story?

When the disciples and the women had left, several of the guards made up their minds to go back to Jerusalem.

And they told the priests all that had happened.

The priests were angry. Then they assembled with the elders. They must take counsel. Had not Jesus announced that he would rise again? What would the people say when they learned that the prophecy was fulfilled?

After long deliberation, the chief priests called the guards and gave them a large sum of money.

"Go, and say that his disciples came by night and stole him away while ye slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him and secure you from his severity."

The soldiers took the money and did as they were taught.

And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

◈ THE DISCIPLES AT EMMAUS ◈

On the evening of the same day, Cleopas and Simon, who were among the seventy-two disciples, were walking

into the country. They were going to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about three score furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened during the past three days. And they were troubled, for the death of their Master had upset all their ideas concerning the Messiah.

As faithful Jews, they expected that the Lord would restore the power of Israel. And now he had allowed himself to be taken and put upon the cross. The women pretended that they had met him; Peter and John declared that he was no longer in the tomb. But what could one believe?

They were talking in this way when they noticed that they were followed by a man.

The man joined them and went with them. And this man was Jesus. But their eyes were dim, like their spirit, and they did not know him.

Perhaps they took him for a peasant coming back from the city.

"What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?" asked the newcomer.

Cleopas was surprised, and said:

"What, art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?"

"What things?"

"Hast thou not heard men speak of Jesus of Nazareth?"

The unknown man fell silent. And Cleopas continued:

"He was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people. The chief priests and the rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have cru-

cified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel. And beside all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done.

"It is true that certain women of our company came and told us astonishing things. They went to the place where his body lay, and it was not there. Angels appeared unto them, saying, He is alive. Several of us went to the sepulcher: they found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not!"

"O fools," Jesus said unto them, "and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?"

And beginning at Moses and all the prophets he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. He recited Psalms of David, recalled one after the other the words of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Micah, and Malachi.

And as they talked, they drew nigh unto Emmaus. Jesus made as though he would have gone further, but Cleopas and Simon constrained him, saying:

"Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. . . . "

He entered their house.

And as he sat at table with them, he took bread, and blessed it and brake and gave to them.

And their eyes were opened, and they knew him.

But he vanished out of their sight.

And they said one to another:

"Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

The wisdom and the knowledge of the unknown man

had astonished them. What he said about Christ had rekindled their faith in Jesus. But they had not recognized him at all.

Now they must go and tell all to the disciples. Straightway they took again the road to Jerusalem.

◆ JESUS APPEARS TO THE APOSTLES ◆

Now at Jerusalem the eleven were gathered together, and with them a certain number of disciples. They were all talking about the mysterious disappearance of the body of Jesus.

Was the Lord alive, as Mary Magdalene and the other women had said?

Simon Peter declared that the Master had appeared unto him; but had not Simon Peter, since his denial of Jesus, been the prey of remorse and not quite himself?

James, who was called the brother of the Lord, also told a strange story. After Jesus had been taken away by the agents of the priests, James made a vow that he would neither eat nor drink until he should see the Master risen from the dead. Now, on the morning of the third day, behold, suddenly a table appeared before him. And the Lord came and blessed the bread and gave James to drink, saying:

"Eat this bread now, my brother, for the Son of man is risen from the dead." [1]

Surely all these things were very perplexing, and the apostles did not know what to think.

At this moment, Cleopas and Simon appeared. And they told all that had happened to them: the meeting with Jesus on the road to Emmaus, and how they had

[1] Gospel of the Nazarenes (apocryphal).

recognized him when he broke the bread. When they heard this story, a profound emotion possessed the disciples: they could no longer doubt the resurrection of the Master.

And, behold, Jesus himself stood in their midst. Now the door of the upper room, which had been carefully barred on account of fear of the Jews, had not been opened.

The pallor of the Lord was so great that the apostles rose to their feet. They were frightened, for they thought this was an apparition.

But Jesus said:

"Peace be unto you."

And seeing their terror:

"Why are ye troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts? It is I, fear not!"

Then, showing his wounds:

"Behold my hands and my feet. Handle me and see: for spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."

The joy of all was very great. But the shock had been so violent that no one moved, no one spoke. Then Jesus asked:

"Have ye here any meat?"

He wished to show them that it was not a ghost.

On a table there was some broiled fish and a piece of a honeycomb. And while he ate he reproached them for their lack of faith and the hardness of their hearts.

The disciples hung their heads and could give no answer.

To dispel their confusion, Jesus said again:

"Peace be unto you."

And, speaking of their mission:

"As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

Then he breathed on them.

"Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

He spoke, then went away as he had come.

◈ THOMAS THE DOUBTER ◈

But Thomas, called Didymus, was not with them. Thomas was generous but crude, a positive nature. Although he had been a witness of the miracles done by Jesus, he obstinately refused to admit what was beyond his intelligence. When the disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" the news only made him doubtful.

"Except I see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe that he is living."

Nothing could move him.

And after eight days again his disciples were within the house, and Thomas with them. Suddenly Jesus appeared.

"Peace be unto you!"

The door was shut, and each one was wondering how he had entered.

The Lord came to Thomas.

"Reach hither thy finger," he said unto him, "and behold my hands: and reach hither thy hand: thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing."

Then Thomas knelt at the feet of Jesus.

"My Lord and my God!" he cried, thus confessing his repentance and his faith.

"Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed," said Jesus. Then he added, "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed."

And he withdrew from before their eyes.

◈ THE SECOND MIRACULOUS TAKING OF FISHES ◈

After the pilgrims who had come from the Feast of the Passover had gone back to their villages, the apostles and the disciples left Jerusalem. They wanted to go into Galilee, where Jesus had promised he would come to visit them.

It was on the shores of the lake of Tiberias, where so often he had told them the Good News, that Jesus showed himself to them.

Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the two sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples were there together.

Simon Peter declared:

"I go a fishing."

The others said:

"We also go with thee."

Immediately they gathered together their nets and entered into a ship. But that night they caught nothing.

But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore, when Simon Peter and his companions were preparing to haul in their boat.

"Children," asked the Lord, "have ye any meat?"

"No!" they said.

From where they were they could scarcely see the features of the one who questioned them, and they did not know that it was Jesus.

He commanded them:

"Cast the net on the right side of the ship."

They obeyed. And behold they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

Then John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, understood. Turning toward Peter he cried:

"It is the Lord!"

Therefore when Simon Peter heard, he girt his fisher's coat unto him (for he was naked) and cast himself into the sea.

And the other disciples came in a little ship (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fishes.

As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals lighted, on the sand. Bread had been prepared, and on the coals there was a fish ready to broil.

And Jesus said unto them:

"Bring of the fish which ye have now caught."

Simon Peter went up to the ship and drew the net to the shore. Now there were a hundred and fifty-three great fishes in the net, but although there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

"Come and dine," said Jesus.

They sat and waited for him to serve them. Jesus then cometh and taketh bread and giveth them; he taketh fish and giveth them.

They all ate in silence, without raising their eyes to look upon him who was serving them. They were troubled because Jesus had taken another form so that they did not recognize him. They knew, however, that it was the Lord; that is why not one of them dared ask:

"Who art thou?"

◈ PETER, THE PASTOR OF THE FLOCK ◈

When they had eaten, Jesus spoke to Simon Peter:

"Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?"

Since Peter had doubted, his love now must be stronger than the love of the other disciples.

Simon Peter answered with humility:

"Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee."

Jesus saith unto him:

"Feed my lambs!"

Had he not promised him the keys of Heaven and, upon earth, the first place?

Again Jesus asked him:

"Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?"

"Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee."

"Feed my sheep!" said Jesus again.

A third time he asked him the same question, for Peter had thrice denied his Master, and he must confess him three times:

"Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?"

Before this insistence, Peter was grieved. What did the Lord want of him? Did he doubt his fidelity? All trembling, Peter replied:

"Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."

And Jesus said:

"Feed my sheep!"

After having confided unto him the lambs of his Church, he confided the sheep; after the faithful sheep, he confided the shepherds; after the flock, he confided those who multiplied the flock. He gave him supreme

rank; he gave him power over all, as to his representative here below. But Peter was to pay for this honor with martyrdom; for, as Jesus was about to show him, he was to have the same fate as his Lord.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you," continued Jesus, "when thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not."

Jesus said this to Peter to test him, signifying by what death he should glorify God. Then he added:

"Follow me!"

Then Peter arose; he was trembling, but he arose. Come what might, he would follow the Lord. Perhaps he would have loved to hear Jesus speak to others as he had spoken to him. Perhaps he would have loved to travel in company with them along the sorrowful way upon which his Master was leading him. And, turning about, Peter saw the disciple whom Jesus loved, the one who during the last supper leaned upon his breast and asked him, "Lord, which is he among us that betrayeth thee?" And Peter asked:

"Lord, and what shall this man do?"

But Jesus, reading the depths of his soul, said unto him:

"If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me!"

It was for the Lord to decide, for Peter to obey.

Badly interpreted, these words of Jesus would lead the disciples to believe that John was not to die. It was John himself that disabused them, for he pointed out that the Lord had not said, "He shall not die!" but, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"

◈ JESUS APPEARS UPON THE MOUNTAIN AND IN THE UPPER ROOM ◈

Jesus left them in a mysterious way, as he had come to them three times before.

Now he had commanded them to go on the mountain in Galilee, promising that he would appear unto them again.

The eleven therefore went upon the mountain, and there were with them more than five hundred disciples.[1]

And as he had promised, Jesus appeared to them all. And when they saw him, all worshiped him, even those that had doubted.

Then, coming to them, Jesus spoke:

"All power is given unto me in Heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these things shall follow them that believe: in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents in their hands with impunity. If they drink any deadly thing, it shall be as if it were not poison. They shall lay hands on the sick, and the sick shall be healed.

"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

And during forty days he appeared to the disciples thus, always telling them about the Kingdom of God.[2]

[1] I Corinthians.
[2] Acts, i.

Now the apostles had returned to Jerusalem. It was there that the Lord came to them for the last time.

That day they were at table when he entered the room to share their meal.

And he said unto them: "Behold, all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me. These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you."

Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures.

And he said unto them:

"Thus it is written: It behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

"And ye are witnesses of these things.

"And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you."

For the Lord declared unto Jacob:

"I shall spread the waters over the dry earth, the brooks over the thirsty land; I shall give my spirit unto thy posterity, and my benediction upon those who shall come forth from thee." [1]

"But tarry ye," continued Jesus, "in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

"John baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."

Always pursued by the idea of the power of the Jews, the apostles asked:

"Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

[1] Isaiah.

Jesus answered:

"It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath chosen to manifest his power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." [1]

◈ THE ASCENSION ◈

And when he had spoken, he went out with his disciples, and he led them out as far as to Bethany.

Already the sun was setting. When they were on the Mount of Olives, Jesus lifted up his hands and blessed them.

And it came to pass, while he blessed them, that a great light came down to him so bright that no light could be compared with it, for it came from the Light of Lights.[2]

Then Jesus was parted from them and carried up to Heaven. They were looking, and suddenly a cloud veiled him from their eyes, while he was lifted into Heaven where he was to sit at the right hand of God.

And while they looked, filled with astonishment, two men stood by them in white apparel. They were angels.

"Ye men of Galilee," said the angels, "why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into Heaven."

The disciples fell to the ground, and after they had

[1] Acts, i.

[2] "The Book of Faithful Wisdom" (text of the seventh or eighth century).

worshiped, they returned to Jerusalem. They returned from the Mount of Olives, which is one Sabbath day's journey from Jerusalem.

And there was great joy in them.

And every day they were in the Temple, praising and blessing God.

Later they left Jerusalem.

And after their departure, they preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word, by the miracles which accompanied it.

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